10 YEARS LATER: HOW THE LAQUAN McDONALD VIDEO CHANGED EVERYTHING

CHICAGO®

NOVEMBER 2025

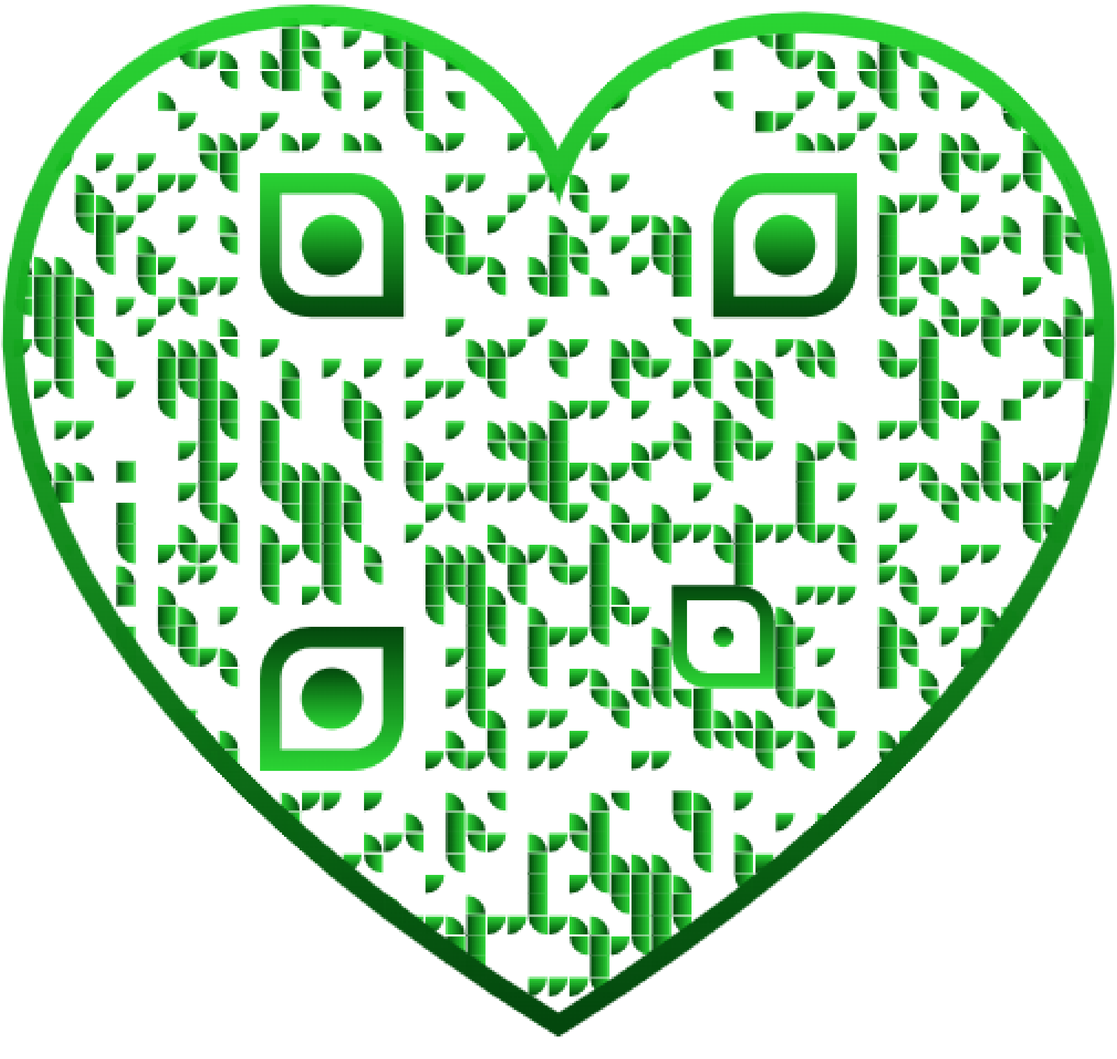
THE BEST STEAKHOUSES

OUR FAVORITES, RANKED

Chef John Manion of El Che (No. 5) with a 48-ounce tomahawk

THE FIGHT FOR FAIR LEGISLATIVE MAPS

PHOTO ESSAY: THE CITY AT 2 A.M.



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ON TOP OF THE WORLD

St. Pete-Clearwater is a prime Gulf Coast destination. Widely loved for its sugar-white sand beaches, emerald Gulf waters and local hospitality, it's a place that keeps visitors coming back time and again. Whether you're looking for a quick couple's getaway or a relaxing family vacation, this vibrant beachside community has something for every traveler. Long, lazy beach days flow into exciting evenings out on the town providing the perfect balance of relaxation and adventure.

St. Pete-Clearwater is known for its daily celebrations of the sunset. And the best place to watch one of these famous sunsets is from one of the many rooftop bars. The beautiful breezes combine with sweeping beach views to create the perfect ambiance to end the day and begin your night. One of the first and most well-known rooftop bars is The Azura Sundown Rooftop and Lounge at The Hotel Zamora. Shannon May, General Manager says the rooftop is great for both special events and regular sunset celebrations. "The rooftop is host of many events. It's beautiful and gives you all the views. It's a great

> **"THE ROOFTOP IS HOST OF MANY EVENTS. IT'S BEAUTIFUL AND GIVES YOU ALL THE VIEWS."**
>
> SHANNON MAY
> *General Mananger of The Hotel Zamora*

place to come have a drink. We've added special events like music trivia and music bingo, or you can come and unwind and just enjoy the beautiful sunset."

These exceptional settings are enhanced by the warm welcome visitors receive from locals. According to May residents and guests are one in the same, and that makes all the difference. "We really try to embrace the locals and visitors alike. We want to create that community feel. Whether they are out of town guests of the hotel, or local guests of the restaurant, whether they arrive by boat or drive; all are welcomed. It's special, and it sets us apart from other rooftops."

The only thing better than sitting on a beautiful beach all day might be enjoying it from a rooftop as the sun sets. St. Pete-Clearwater has created a unique community that warmly welcomes visitors and believes that daily celebrations are always a good idea. Spend your days enjoying the coastal warmth and your evenings celebrating one of nature's daily wonders from one of the many special rooftop experiences.

Discover more in St. Pete-Clearwater with the Gulf to Bay magazine. Scan the code to read it online or request a free copy by mail.

LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Top 5 Must Do Experiences for Shannon May, The Hotel Zamora

You don't have to be an experienced Captain to enjoy a boat for the day. "I think, renting a boat with the ***Electric Boat Company*** *and watching the dolphins swim alongside your boat, is pretty special."*

May also likes to take in downtown on two wheels, "I love to take a bicycle ride throughout downtown St. Pete and end up wandering down the pier."

May's favorite beach isn't a surprise. "Of course, I'm going to say ***St. Pete Beach****, since we're here, but I think depending on what the traveler is looking for,* ***St. Pete-Clearwater****, has really everything that somebody would be looking for. Whether they're looking for quiet and serene or the hustle and bustle of Clearwater, whatever they're looking for, we have it."*

May loves the neighborhood establishments that always have something new to offer. "The area from ***Gulf Boulevard to Corey Avenue*** *is great for restaurants and rooftops and a short walk from us."*

And finally, May says there's nothing better than the daily sunset, "Sunset is this side of the side of the coast, there's nothing like it."

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Volume 73 ■ Number 10

FEATURES

2:39 a.m., O’Hare International Airport

76

2 A.M.

We asked six photographers to capture a slice of the city at an hour when most Chicagoans are asleep. Here’s what they came back with one Thursday in September.

48

THE BEST STEAKHOUSES IN TOWN

In a scene that’s rapidly evolving, with splashy newcomers and international influences, we rank our 12 favorites. **Plus**: Wine pairings, leftovers tips, and more.
By Amy Cavanaugh and John Kessler

64

THE VIDEO THAT SHOOK CHICAGO

Ten years ago, dashcam footage was released showing Laquan McDonald being shot to death by a police officer. Nothing would ever be the same again.
By Mike Thomas

Photograph by ALEX GARCIA

DEPARTMENTS

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THE 312
Fighting for fair legislative maps … An early football hero … High electric bills … Chuy García's guide to Little Village … A *Chicago P.D.* actor's regimen.

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GO
Fresh off their first album in nine years, the longtime rock innovators Tortoise perform with the Chicago Philharmonic … The 10 best things to do this month.

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TABLE
A Chicago-style Thanksgiving … Mexican bars … Two tavern-style pizza spots enter the scene … A fun izakaya … How to make Thattu's comforting curry.

45
CHICAGO STORIES
Chicago's go-to restorer has worked on everything from two particular bronze lions to ancient rock art. **By Joanna Marszałek**

87
FOUND
A designer infuses her heritage into special-occasion garments … How to spend $100 at Charm Bar … Cherry-red hues take center stage.

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ON THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY GARRETT SWEET

PHOTOGRAPHY: (PORTRAIT) NATE RYAN; (PRODUCTS) COURTESY OF VENDORS; (RESTAURANT) LUCY HEWETT

Ashley Graham - Ariana DeBose

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
Terrance Noland

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
David Syrek

DEPUTY EDITOR
Stanley Kay
DINING EDITOR
Amy Cavanaugh

ART DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Carlisle
PHOTO DIRECTOR
Jaclyn Rivas

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Kelly Aiglon (Found)
Web Behrens (Go)
Edward McClelland (The 312)
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mark Bazer, Ximena N. Beltran Quan Kiu, Lolly Bowean, Kim Brooks, Mark Caro, Thomas Connors, Kelley Engelbrecht, Nina Kokotas Hahn, Cate Huguelet, John Kessler (dining critic), **Rebecca Makkai, Jake Malooley, Heidi Mitchell, Grace Perry, Tal Rosenberg, Kathleen Rooney, Peter Sagal, Heidi Stevens, Judy Sutton Taylor, Mike Thomas**
CONTRIBUTING COPY EDITORS
Robert Loerzel, Amy Schroeder
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
Jenny Hellwig, Madison Roth

CONTRIBUTING ART DIRECTOR
Britney Trezzo
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Jeff Marini, Lisa Predko
CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS
QuickHoney, John Kenzie
CONTRIBUTING DIGITAL IMAGING SPECIALIST
Andrew Davis

CONTRIBUTING DIGITAL EDITOR
Sarah Steimer
DIGITAL PRODUCERS
Mike Lietz, Lynette Smith

PRODUCTION SPECIALIST
Alyssa Boyce

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REGIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES

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Account Manager
JUSTIN NAKAAHIKI
808-739-2200
justinnakaahiki@dmhawaii.com

Michigan
Regional Manager
JAN HESS-WAHL
248-505-0796
jhesswahl@comcast.net

Northeast U.S. and Mid-Atlantic
National Account Director
CYNTHIA DONAHER
917-679-5506
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Southeast U.S.
Account Director
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SHANA WONG SOLARES
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FROM THE EDITOR

The Righteous Ones

LIKE A LOT OF US LIVING IN CHICAGO IN 2015, MIKE THOMAS remembers well the protests that followed the release of dash-cam footage of a police officer killing 17-year-old Laquan McDonald. But it wasn't until he began work on "The Video That Shook Chicago" (page 64) that he fully understood what it took to get that recording made public. He talked to the seven key people: journalists, activists, lawyers, and a witness. "All of them were just fearless about what they were doing," he says. "They'd run into brick walls but just kept going. The other thing that surprised me was how iterative the process was, how some individual efforts inspired the efforts of others."

The video made a lasting impact on this city. "Until people actually got a chance to watch it instead of just reading descriptions of it, I don't think it really hit home how horrific this event was," says Thomas. But for Brandon Smith, the independent journalist who filed the Freedom of Information Act lawsuit that ultimately forced the video's release, the fight took a toll. The stress contributed, he told Thomas, to his subsequent divorce. And even though he played a pivotal role in Chicago's biggest story of the decade, Smith was unable to land a full-time journalism job here. He has since moved to New Hampshire, where he works as a project manager for a home builder. Nonetheless, we will never forget what he did for this city.

Terrance Noland
Editor in Chief

INSIDE PEEK

In Rare Form

How did *Chicago* food mavens Amy Cavanaugh and John Kessler go about ranking the city's top steakhouses for this month's cover story (page 48)? Here's a by-the-numbers look. BY JENNY HELLWIG

81	HOURS SPENT AT STEAKHOUSES
13	NUMBER OF MARTINIS CONSUMED
$466	HIGHEST BILL FOR ONE DINER **(Amy at Asador Bastian)**
84	OLDEST STEAKHOUSE VISITED, IN YEARS **(Gene & Georgetti)**
31	TOTAL NUMBER OF STEAKS EATEN
14	MOST COURSES EATEN IN ONE NIGHT **(Amy at Bonyeon)**
4	MOST STEAKHOUSES VISITED IN A SINGLE WEEK **(by Amy)**
2	NUMBER OF DISHES SEEN ON FIRE

PHOTOGRAPHY: (NOLAND) MICHAEL ZAJAKOWSKI; (STEAK) GARRETT SWEET

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TALK TO US

Schools THAT Rule
HAWTHORNE SCHOLASTIC ACADEMY
CHICAGO
THE POPE'S HOUSE
A story of divinity and division in Dolton
Plus THE BEST PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, RANKED

Dolton was in the crapper, but folks want to complain about the pope breathing life into this sorry suburb, smh.

@InPortCharles *via X*

Da Pope's Residence

Dolton needed to move fast on this ["Bob's House," September], and now the pope admiration by non-Catholics has died out, reduced to Malört memes – and even those are stale. **@Maggiolone85 *via X***

I have some bad news for Dolton: You are in the most corrupt and bankrupt state in the Union, so no, some suburban tract home is not going to be anyone's salvation.
@WasemAdam *via X*

TOP-TIER SCHOOLS
Of course you don't compare public and private schools ["Schools That Rule," September]. [You just] push, push, push for public schools.
@evasophia67
via Instagram

The title should really read: Schools That Have the Best Test Takers.
@amberbergmann
via Instagram

RAHM'S RUN
Oh great, "back toward the center" ["Return of the Rahmosaurus," September]. Thank God the Dems have learned from their mistakes over the past decade.
@delenamae
via Instagram

WHERE THE CHIPS FALL
Local Style's hot dog chips are the best ever ["This Month's Obsession," September], and I don't even like hot dogs.
Kathy Baker *via Facebook*

LULA LOVE
This is the dish [baked French feta] that made my husband and I fall in love with Lula Cafe ["In the Kitchen," September]!
@brogandboone
via Instagram

🟥 **CORRECTION**
"The Best of Fall" (October) misstated Chloé Mendel Corgan's relationship with the House of Gilles fashion studio. She cofounded it with her father.

WHERE TO FIND US

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PHOTOGRAPH: JACLYN RIVAS

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DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

Chicago magazine's special feature will uncover all of the shopping, dining, and theater offerings that Chicago has to offer this holiday season.

69% of readers have dined at a specific restaurant after reading *Chicago* magazine

49% of readers attended a show/performance after reading *Chicago* magazine

SPACE CLOSE: OCTOBER 15 | **MATERIALS DUE:** OCTOBER 17

TOP DOCS

JANUARY 2026 ISSUE

This January, *Chicago* magazine's editorial team will feature the Castle Connolly Top Cancer Doctors in the 6 county area. In addition to this content, we provide an advertising opportunity to highlight your medical profession and expertise within our "Medical Profiles".

SPACE CLOSE: NOVEMBER 10 | **MATERIALS DUE:** NOVEMBER 12

Contact Megan Holbrook at mholbrook@chicagomag.com for more information.

Q:

What is the oldest town in Illinois?

CITY OF BIG QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY EDWARD McCLELLAND

The answer dates back to 1703, when the French controlled the Illinois Country. That year a Jesuit group established its mission along the east bank of the Mississippi River to minister to the Kaskaskia tribe of Native Americans and founded a permanent settlement named for the group. They also set up a fur trading post there.

The town played an important role in Illinois's early history. In 1741, King Louis XV sent a 140-pound bell to Kaskaskia. When George Rogers Clark captured the town from the British in 1778, during the Revolutionary War, the bell was rung in celebration, earning it the name the Liberty Bell of the West (although it is actually 11 years older than the one in Philadelphia).

In 1818, when Illinois became a state, Kaskaskia was its first capital. That was its peak, when the population was around 7,000. A year later, the capital was moved to Vandalia. Then, in 1881, the Mississippi River changed course and began flowing east of Kaskaskia, which not only wiped out much of the town but severed it from the rest of Illinois. In 1993, Kaskaskia was submerged by a flood. Today, it isn't just the oldest town in Illinois, it's also one of the smallest, with a population of 23 living in a few houses scattered across the floodplain.

Send your questions about the Chicago area to emcclelland@chicagomag.com.

ILLUSTRATION: GREG CLARKE

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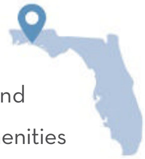
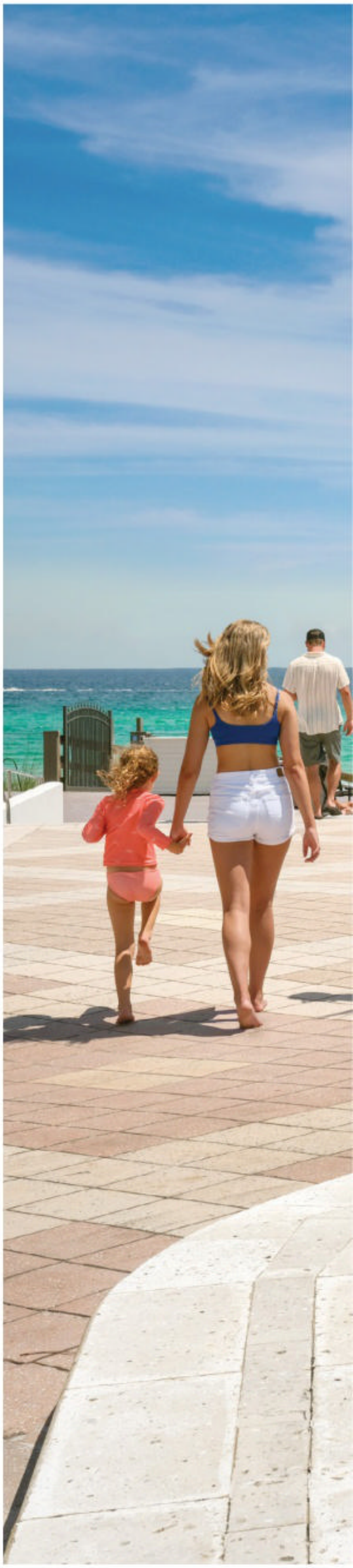


With 16 unique beach neighborhoods along 26 miles of sugar-white sand and turquoise water, South Walton is the ultimate event destination. Luxurious amenities meet small-town charm for getaways that feel like coming home, no matter where you're from. With convenient airport access and easy driving from Atlanta, Birmingham, and New Orleans, you'll spend less time en route and more time in good company.



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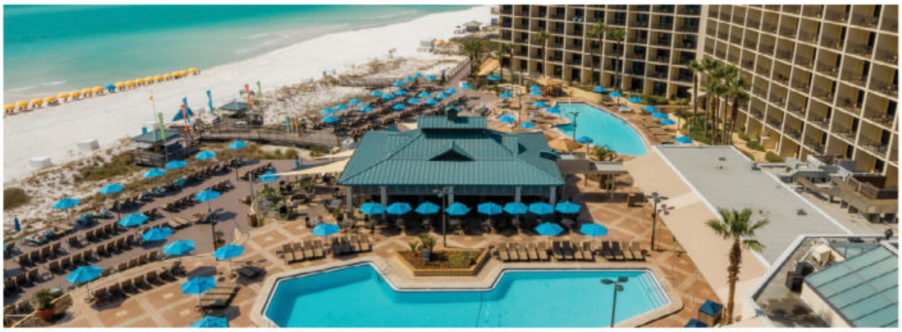

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DAYTONA

Where the Ocean Meets the Shore

For a destination known as "The World's Most Famous Beach," it should be no surprise that the area's appeal starts where the ocean meets the shore. The coastline here is positively sprawling, some 23 miles long and at low tide almost impossibly wide. There's more than enough room to stroll, sunbathe or simply stare out at the Atlantic waves. And for the more adventurous, there's no shortage of surf schools, paddleboard rentals and fishing charters waiting to tempt them to leave the sands behind as well.

Then, at the end of the day, the accommodations in Daytona Beach are as welcoming as the friendly individuals who call the area home. From quaint seaside properties to boutique hotels revived in art deco splendor to the ultra-chic Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach, travelers are free to choose where they'll rest their heads— and where they'll dream of the adventures tomorrow may bring.

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THE 312

McCartney

Talking Points

This month's conversation starters

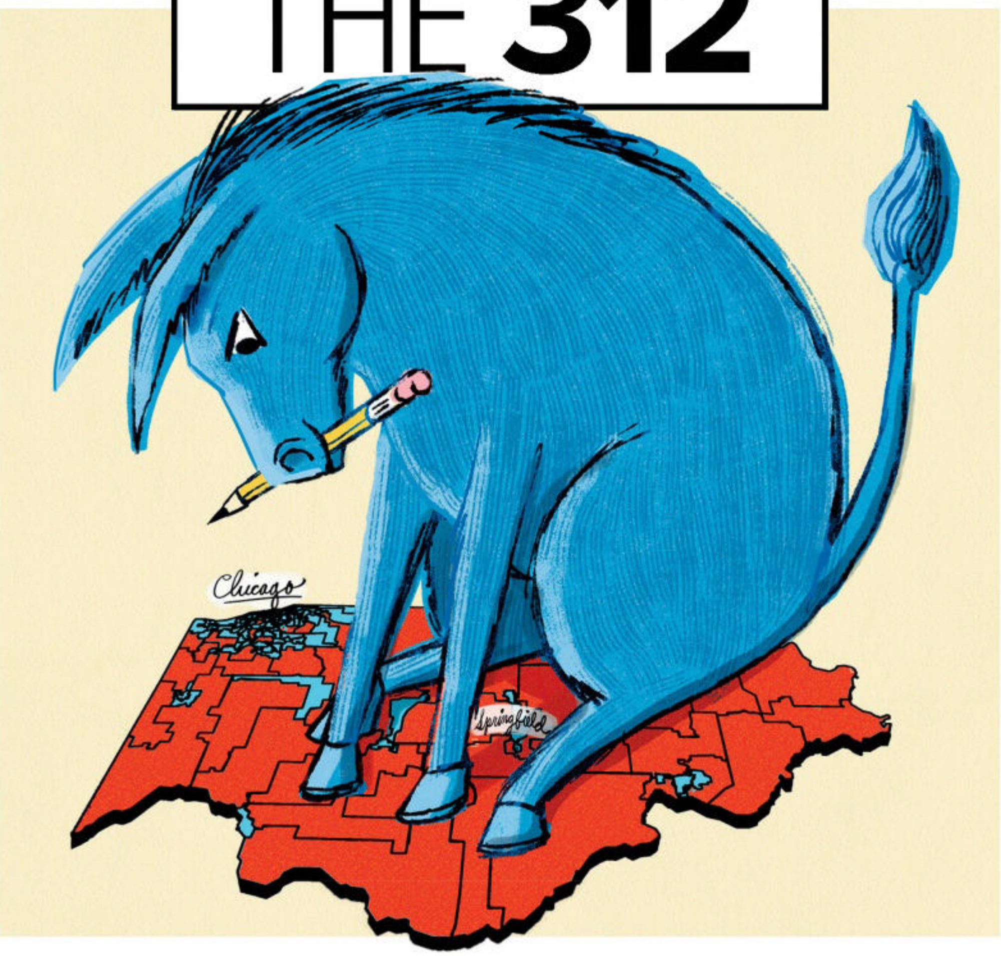
1 Paul McCartney ends his Got Back tour with two shows at the United Center on Nov. 24 and 25. The 83-year-old first played Chicago in 1964, as a Beatle, at the International Amphitheatre. Expect less shrieking this time.

2 On Nov. 1, Illinois starts its own health insurance marketplace through **Get Covered Illinois**, joining 19 other states in moving away from the federal HealthCare.gov amid rising costs.

3 Northwestern football leaves its temporary lakefront stadium, where it has been playing while Ryan Field gets rebuilt, for a pair of games at Wrigley Field: Nov. 15 against Michigan and Nov. 22 against Minnesota. That's a 250 percent jump in seating capacity.

4 On Nov. 15, Nike is bringing back its coveted retro **Air Jordan 1 Low OG Chicago**, featuring Bulls colors. It's a low-cut ode to MJ's original high-top but with modern refinements, naturally.

PHOTOGRAPH: EMMA MCINTYRE/GETTY IMAGES



Map Games

Illinois Democrats have long worked state legislative lines to their advantage. Now comes a push for a fairer process.

By EDWARD McCLELLAND

BILL DALEY IS A SCION OF CHICAGO'S DEMOCRATIC ROYALTY. HIS FATHER RAN THE city for 21 years, and his brother for 22 years, both oiling the party machine. He has served two Democratic presidents: as commerce secretary under Bill Clinton and White House chief of staff under Barack Obama. And yet he's pushing for a measure that would effectively reduce his party's stranglehold on the state.

Why? When he looks at the Illinois legislature, he sees a statehouse that doesn't truly represent the people. In the last election, Democrats won 66 percent of seats in the General Assembly despite claiming only 55 percent of the votes. This, Daley believes, is bad for democracy.

The culprits are Illinois legislative maps advantageously drawn by Democrats. (The state Senate one received an F from the watchdog Princeton Gerrymandering Project.) To address that, Daley has signed on as cochair of Fair Maps Illinois, a bipartisan group aiming to establish an independent commission to draw the maps, taking redistricting out of the hands of the state legislature's majority. He's leading the effort with former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a Peoria Republican.

"There's no doubt that just about every state where the legislature draws the maps, the majority, especially when you have a supermajority, are out to protect their seats," says Daley. Not

Illustration by ROBERT NEUBECKER

only does that lead to a state legislature that doesn't proportionally represent the populace, it also creates districts so safely in control of one party that the general election is rendered moot. Last November, almost half the races for House seats – a staggering 54 of 118 – went uncontested, meaning the other party didn't even bother running a candidate because there was no realistic chance of winning.

"Whether it was the Republicans in the '90s or the Democrats now, you then end up with a system where the primary is everything," says Daley. The problem with that is it tends to favor political extremism over moderation, since candidates don't have much incentive to court voters of other persuasions. "People just run to the right or run to the left."

> **"Whether it was the Republicans in the '90s or the Democrats now, you end up with a system where the primary is everything."**
>
> *–Bill Daley, cochair of Fair Maps Illinois*

The Fair Maps proposal would put a binding referendum on next November's ballot to establish the map-drawing commission. Composed of four legislators and eight nonlegislators, all appointed by legislative leaders, the commission would be tasked with drawing maps that respect municipal, county, and township boundaries; it would also be prohibited from using partisan information or voting records, which are the secret sauce to gerrymandering. The new maps would not take effect until the 2032 elections.

This isn't the first push get such a referendum on the ballot. In 2016, one group collected enough signatures, but its proposal was struck down by the Illinois Supreme Court. It ruled that a citizen initiative can address only "structural and procedural" issues; that one would have overstepped by giving the state auditor general the power to select commission members. This time, says Michael Dorf, general counsel for Fair Maps Illinois, the proposal has been crafted to avoid such constitutional issues by involving legislators in the process and giving the commission the power to handle only state-level seats.

If the referendum gets on the ballot (its supporters plan to collect 600,000 signatures – nearly double the number required – to withstand challenges), it will almost certainly pass. In the past, whenever voters in Illinois have been asked about establishing independent redistricting commissions, 70 to 80 percent of them have approved the nonbinding referendums.

Although Republicans are taking heat on the national level for torturing district lines to their benefit, namely in Texas and Missouri, the reality is that Illinois Democrats have been doing the same thing for years. Complaints about gerrymandering here go all the way back to the 1858 race between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas for a U.S. Senate seat. Lincoln's Republicans won more votes for the state legislature, but the Democrats won more seats, guaranteeing Douglas's reelection in the days when legislatures chose senators. "An apportionment law ridiculously adopted to the existing facts has given Mr. Douglas a substantial but undeserved triumph," groused the Republican *Chicago Tribune*. "Now who's cheating?"

Today, 167 years later, Illinois Republicans are still complaining about Democratic gerrymandering: a congressional map under which they won only three out of 17 seats (despite that fact that President Donald Trump received 43.5 percent of the state's votes), and an Illinois General Assembly map that has consigned them to superminorities in both chambers. "Democrats' God is power and control, and their church is the government," says the chair of the Illinois Republican Party, Kathy Salvi. "They have used that power to draw maps that disserve the people of Illinois."

But as old as gerrymandering is, the practice became a dark art under former House Speaker Michael Madigan, who used computer technology that incorporated detailed voter data, allowing him to draw maps that eventually gave the Democrats a veto-proof majority by packing Republicans together in selected districts. The tradition has continued under his successor, Emanuel "Chris" Welch, who in 2021 passed the map that has led to the party's current massive majorities in Springfield.

The Fair Maps Illinois proposal does have its critics, and they're not just Democrats who are reluctant to give up power. CHANGE Illinois, a nonpartisan government watchdog group, has long advocated for independent redistricting, but it's skeptical of this initiative because it will include politicians in the process. "I worry that there's an overreaction to past court decisions, and we could end up with a proposal that does more harm than good," says the group's executive director, Ryan Tolley. With politicians both serving on and appointing other members to the commission, the initiative squanders a chance at real independence and reform, he argues.

Republicans, unsurprisingly, have embraced Fair Maps Illinois: They think the proposal will allow them to win more seats and claw their way out of the superminority. But Salvi argues it would be good for the state as a whole by promoting accurate representation as well as encouraging turnout among voters who (not unjustifiably) "think it's a rigged game."

A "fair" map doesn't mean a 50-50 split. Given the partisan tilt of Illinois, it's unlikely that independent redistricting would return the Republicans to the power they enjoyed in the late 20th century anytime soon. But it could at least give their constituents more of a say and, Daley points out, disincentivize the state GOP from continuing to push extreme candidates. That's how democracy is supposed to work: Voters choose their politicians, not the other way around.

FIVE THINGS

Chicago's Original Celebrity Athlete

The new book *Eckie* spotlights Walter Eckersall, a bygone local sports pioneer. Here's what we learned. By ROBERT LOERZEL

From left: Eckersall while at Hyde Park High School; playing for the University of Chicago; in 1921 as a *Tribune* sportswriter.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (ECKERSALL IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE) CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM; (SPORTSWRITER) *CHICAGO TRIBUNE* I ILLUSTRATION: SAM ISLAND

1 The city's first football superstar was puny. Years before the Bears—or the NFL—existed, Walter Eckersall was a Chicago gridiron icon, making headlines first as a Hyde Park High School quarterback, then carrying the University of Chicago Maroons to an undefeated national championship season in 1905. He wasn't exactly a fearsome presence, however. In *Eckie*, author Chris Serb describes him as "5 feet 6 inches tall and skinny, with slumped shoulders and a fragile appearance." But he was speedy and had a knack for eluding tackles.

2 His punt led to a win in the "game of the century." On Thanksgiving Day of that 1905 season, the Maroons beat Michigan, which had won 56 in a row, by a tally rarely seen in football: 2–0. Serb calls the game a "masterpiece far more exciting than its low score would indicate." Chicago earned those two points after Eckersall punted into the end zone and a Michigan player was tackled for a safety. "In common with everybody else from Michigan, I felt murderously inclined toward Eckie that day," famed sportswriter Ring Lardner said.

3 The star player became a star sportswriter. In 1907, when Eckersall's college days were over, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* hired him. Over the next 23 years, he wrote 5,500 stories on a wide range of sports, including many about boxing and the Olympics. Serb calls Eckersall "the lens through which Chicago readers came to understand sports."

4 Eckersall stood up for Black athletes. At a time when many newspapers used slurs against prizefighter Jack Johnson, Eckersall interviewed not only the heavyweight champ but also his local fans. "Eckie took the boxer's side in various disputes, exposing the injustices that Johnson faced, including the refusal of various white contenders to enter the same ring," Serb writes. "He treated Black athletes not as curiosities but with dignity, as athletes and as men."

5 He created two iconic athletic competitions. In 1917, as a *Tribune* writer, Eckersall started the Silver Skates ice-skating race, an annual event that is now run by the park district. Then in 1923, "Eckersall hit on the biggest idea of his career: an amateur boxing tournament," Serb writes. "The Golden Gloves continue today, and the tournament has remained relevant long after its founder was more or less forgotten."

Budget Beaters

A few modest proposals for closing Chicago's $1.15 billion deficit. You're welcome.
BY EDWARD McCLELLAND

- **Sell naming rights to the city:** Since banks love to brand civic institutions, how about Wintrust, Illinois?

- **Smoking cars on the L:** Mayor Johnson has vowed to crack down on cigarette use on the trains. Instead, embrace it and charge smokers double fare for a dedicated car.

- **Distracted-driver cameras:** We have cameras to catch speeders and red-light runners. Why not for drivers who check their phones? At $100 a pop, we'd have to nab only 12 million to erase the deficit.

- **Sell neighborhoods to suburbs:** There's confusion between the community area Riverdale and the village Riverdale. End that by unloading Riverdale to Riverdale.

- **Siphon off Lake Michigan:** With a lot of people and not enough water, California, Arizona, and Texas have long been thirsty for the Great Lakes. Build a pipeline to the Southwest. Michigan would protest, but hey, those folks complain about everything.

Photo Illustration by JOE DARROW

VOX

Power to the People

Sarah Moskowitz of the Citizens Utility Board breaks down why electricity bills are spiking. Interview by KARI LYDERSEN

ELECTRICITY COSTS FOR many people in the Chicago area were up noticeably this summer – 10 to 15 percent from last year, on average, according to ComEd. Why? And what can be done about it? To get some answers, *Chicago* talked with Sarah Moskowitz, executive director of the Chicago-based Citizens Utility Board, an advocacy group for electric and gas consumers that was created by state legislation in 1983. Spoiler alert: It will be at least another year before you get any relief.

Q: On the most basic level, why are our electricity prices spiking?

A: There are a lot of reasons, but most immediately the fact that our regional grid operator, PJM Interconnection, ran an auction for capacity that yielded record high prices.

Q: You're talking about the annual auction in which power generators bid for the right to provide our grid's capacity — that is, for ensuring we have enough electricity to meet peak needs.

A: Here in Illinois, we're a restructured state, which means that state regulators only oversee part of our utility costs – the cost of the delivery of the energy to your home. That's the part that ComEd makes its money off. The actual cost of the juice itself is set by the wholesale regional market run by PJM. That auction took place about a year ago, and the increased rate went into effect June 1.

Q: So you're saying the high prices aren't really ComEd's fault. Rather, the capacity cost is to blame. Why has that increased?

A: The fact that we're facing unprecedented electric demand for the first time in 20 years is definitely a factor. Before now, demand had been relatively flat because of increased efficiency.

Q: Efficiency meaning LED lights, weatherized buildings, more efficient appliances, and the like. At the same time, though, there are more and more electric vehicles on the road and more things running on electricity instead of gas, which might be good for the environment but raises demand, right? Aren't the data centers that are being built to process AI also increasing capacity needs manyfold?

A: Yes, electrification of industry and transportation and, in a large way, the introduction of these energy-guzzling data centers have resulted in much higher forecasts for electric need. Experts can disagree on how those

Photograph by NATE RYAN

> **“Unfortunately, the capacity auction setting next summer’s prices has already happened, and it’s going to be a little higher.”**

forecasts are conducted, and we suspect that they could be overinflated, which exacerbates a perceived supply crunch that leads to these higher auction prices. But it’s true that the demand for electricity is going up in a way that we have not ever seen. Some of these data centers can use the same amount of electricity as a medium-size city, and our markets and our market rules were not developed to deal with that kind of challenge.

Q: This overall increased capacity demand for our region then trickles down to regular customers as higher power bills?

A: Yes, and that was made even worse this summer because of how hot it was. So it wasn’t just the price per kilowatt that went up; people’s usage was out of sight because you needed air conditioning.

Q: Illinois’s Climate and Equitable Jobs Act says we have to phase out fossil fuels by 2045. But if we close coal and natural gas plants, how is it possible to meet this surge in demand that’s expected to continue? Can it be done with renewables like solar and wind?

A: Well, in northern Illinois, we’re not as bad off as some areas because we have so much nuclear generation, which doesn’t emit carbon emissions. But yeah, this is a challenge. When CEJA was written, we did not see this on the horizon. CEJA included a provision mandating state regulators – the Illinois Power Agency, the Illinois Commerce Commission, and the Illinois EPA – to conduct a study to ensure resource adequacy, and they do have the authority to push back those closure dates, if deemed necessary. That study is underway right now. Meanwhile, there’s a lot that we can do, especially in terms of bringing battery storage online, that can help. A lot of times the capacity being built is really only to meet our needs during a few peak hours every year. So batteries can store excess power generated when prices are cheap, like wind power overnight, and be deployed when demand spikes.

Q: So more storage will decrease needed capacity, which will then decrease our bills?

A: Getting more battery storage online quickly can help prevent future capacity cost price spikes. Unfortunately, the capacity auction setting next summer’s prices has already happened, and it’s going to be a little higher. But going forward, hopefully, we ease that supply-demand crunch. There are other low-cost approaches to meeting our energy needs that, now that we are in this crunch, are getting more attention – things like demand response, which is incentivizing electricity users to shift their usage to off-peak times. Traditionally, data centers have said that they can’t do that, that they need to be 100 percent on 100 percent of the time. The AI technology is so new that these technologies will get better and will become more efficient as time goes by. It’s not like, “Don’t worry about it, technology will get us out of this issue,” but overstating the emergency plays into the hands of those entities that want prices to be high. That would be the fossil fuel plant owners.

Q: The Trump administration is quickly phasing out tax credits for renewable energy. What does that do to the outlook for renewables in Illinois?

A: Listen, renewables are a low-cost resource. Unlike other forms of electricity generation, renewables don’t require a fuel that is itself subject to market fluctuations and volatile prices. Renewables can be deployed much more quickly than a gas-fired power plant, and much, much more quickly than a nuclear power plant. It’s a shame that the renewable industry has received the setback just at this time when we need to get as much new electricity on the system as possible.

Q: Is there anything in the short term that consumers can do to help control their bills?

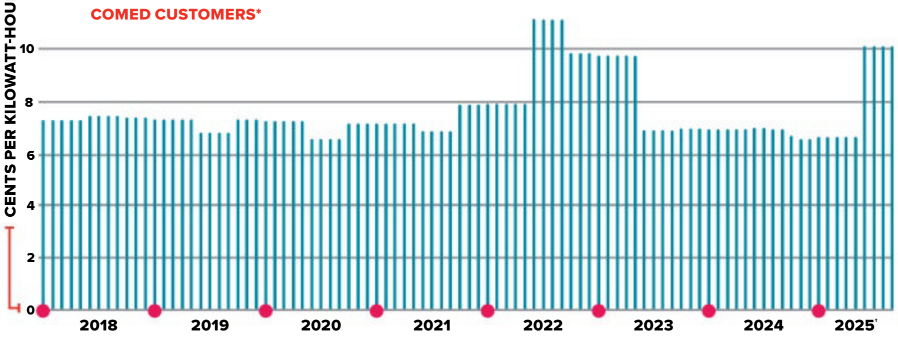
A: ComEd customers do have the option of signing up for a real-time pricing rate, which doesn’t work for everybody, but it works for a lot of people. I’m a happy hourly pricing customer: I pay the market rate for electricity, and I just curb my usage at peak times.

Q: Now that they will no longer be able to get the residential federal tax credit after this year, is there any point in consumers considering solar to lower their bills?

A: The loss of that tax credit will just mean that the payback period for your solar panels will be longer, but they will pay back. In the long run, you will benefit, but the upfront costs will be harder to recoup.

High Energy

Electricity prices have risen to their highest levels since the summer of 2022, when energy costs jumped following a winter cold snap in the South.



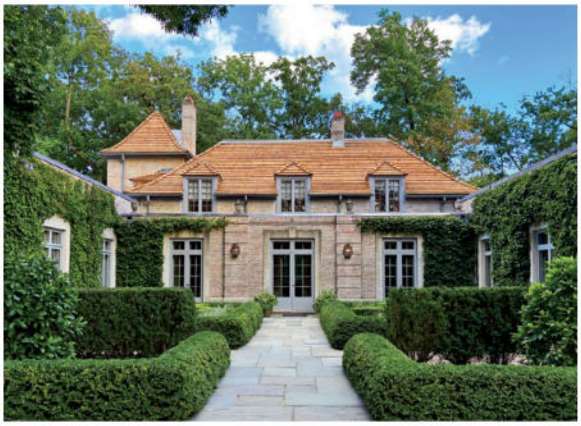
*Excludes ComEd’s delivery charge. ˈThrough September.

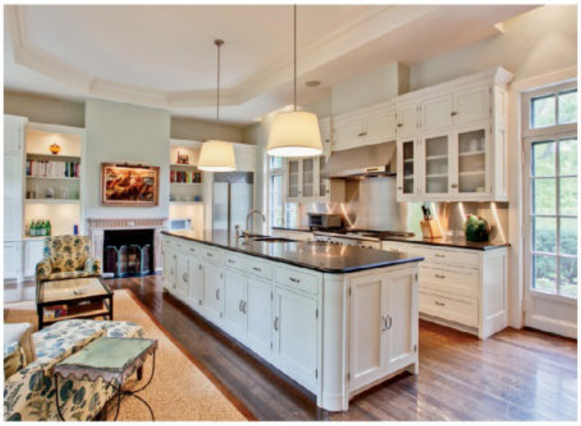
SOURCE: Illinois Commerce Commission

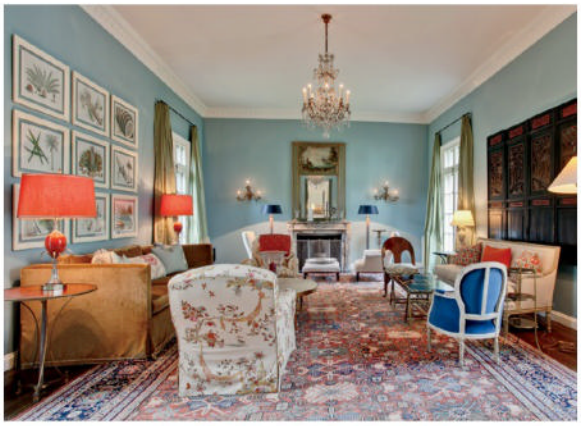
LISTING OF THE MONTH

Broken-Off Beauty

Once a wing of a David Adler manor, this Lake Bluff home stands smartly on its own. By THOMAS CONNORS







CAROLYN MORSE ELY wasn't one for guests. When she commissioned architect David Adler to build her a sizable home in Lake Bluff, she asked for just two two primary bedrooms – hers and a guest room – situated at opposite ends of the house. There were also smaller rooms for servants. After five years, Ely, the only daughter of a steel magnate, sold the property in 1928 to DeForest Hulburd, president of the Elgin Watch Company. In the 1950s, Hulburd detached the north wing, moved it across the lawn, and sold it to a friend. Expanded and updated over the years, this severed section, located at 131 Moffett Road, is now on the market for $3.125 million.

In 2000, interior designer Athalie Derse bought the 6,000-square-foot snipped-off four-bedroom, four-bathroom house for her family. She redid windows and doors to Adler's original designs and added her own touches, such as a terrazzo floor with a bronze inlay in a chevron pattern. The ground floor comprises two wings linked by a 38-foot-long gallery, anchored by a large family room with a fireplace and built-in bookshelves. The second floor is dedicated to the primary suite, with a fireplace in the bedroom and a bathroom featuring a freestanding tub, five closets, and a charming window seat.

In addition to an expansive island for food prep, the kitchen includes a fireplace, a dining area, and a lounging spot roomy enough for a sofa. And the dining room is less dark and buttoned-up than is usual for homes of this vintage, with a black-and-white checkerboard floor and French doors leading to the garden. Adler would roll over in his grave if he knew the Ely home had been truncated. But if he got a gander of this renovation, he might just sit up and smile. ■

MY NEIGHBORHOOD
LITTLE VILLAGE

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JESÚS "CHUY" GARCÍA RECOMMENDS THESE FOUR SPOTS IN HIS HOOD.

▼

> LA CATEDRAL

"This restaurant is famous for its chilaquiles — it has at least 10 varieties. The decor honors the name: It feels like you've entered a church. Ambrocio Gonzalez, the chef-owner, is committed to lifting up Mexican culture with his culinary treats." *2500 S. Christiana Ave.*

> ARTESANÍAS ELENA

"I've known Elena Durán, the owner, forever. Her store's tag line is 'A Corner of Mexico in Chicago.' She works directly with artists and producers from all regions in Mexico. You can get jewelry, ceramics, decorations for Day of the Dead, clothing." *4333 W. 26th St.*

> CARNITAS URUAPAN

"The Carbajal family, a father and son, have been in the restaurant business for years. They feature pretty much only one meal: Michoacán-style pork carnitas. It's great, high-quality food." *3801 W. 26th St.*

> LITTLE VILLAGE ARCH

"It's where people go when they want to show they're visiting Little Village. I had a big hand in getting it built after I was elected alderman in 1986." *26th and Troy Streets* – XIMENA N. BELTRAN QUAN KIU

PHOTOGRAPHY: (HOUSE EXTERIOR) NANCY ADELMAN; (INTERIORS) PALO DOBRIK; (GARCÍA) U.S. HOUSE OFFICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

THE REGIMEN

Marina Squerciati

TV crime fighter, coffee fiend, skin preserver

By KELLY AIGLON

AS DETECTIVE KIM Burgess on *Chicago P.D.*, actor Marina Squerciati has barreled down alleys, fought with criminals, and even climbed into a well once. No surprise, then, that her offscreen wellness routine is geared toward preparing her both physically and mentally. “If you’re not ready to sprint up stairs or do a stunt, you’re going to get hurt,” she says. Last year, Squerciati, who has been with the show for all 13 seasons, was back on set a mere four weeks after a C-section. That kind of grit defines life these days for the Northwestern grad, who balances long shooting days with raising two kids under 10. “I’m really just keeping it all together with duct tape right now.”

DAILY GRIND
“I don’t have stamina; I have coffee. La Colombe, VietFive, Groundwell, Dark Matter—I go to them all. A Beatrix recently opened on our production lot. I spend so much money there during breaks.”

SKIN DEEP
“High-def isn’t kind to actresses, so I maintain a rigorous skin care routine. I go to SpaDerma for Hydrafacials and microneedling. At home, I use a Hungarian line, Eminence Organics; the strawberry rhubarb serum is *so* good. I’ve also started doing ice baths for my face to boost circulation and reduce puffiness. Sunscreen is a must; I use EltaMD UV Clear under makeup and reapply over it.”

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
“Pilates at The Sol Room has been huge for me. After my C-section, I didn’t think I’d sit up unassisted again. Jai, the owner, is a truly gifted instructor. On weekends, I also do group weight training at Bracey Performance. When I do dumbbells, I’m at 35 pounds each arm. My goal is to be tired by the end, having given 100 percent.”

HEAD GAMES
“I read a lot. I’m drawn to lofty fiction. And at night my husband and I do the *New York Times* Connections. It’s short but uses your brain. There’s a competitive spirit in my home: Yesterday I couldn’t finish, but my husband did. That made him happy.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF VENDORS

Photograph by LISA PREDKO

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FLY
DIE
SYNTHEX
ELKA

Tortoise's Next Movement

Fresh off their first album in nine years, the longtime rock innovators perform with the Chicago Philharmonic. By MARK BAZER

The band (from left): Douglas McCombs, Jeff Parker, John Herndon, Dan Bitney (in cap), and John McEntire

Photograph by JASON LECRAS

THE MEMBERS OF TORTOISE don't operate like they used to. At least not like at the beginning, back in the early '90s, when most of the experimental rock band lived together in a converted warehouse loft in pregentrified West Town, innovating a sound that music critics dubbed "post-rock." For starters, the quintet's members, now spread across the country, send each other more emails. "To even have a meeting is, like, 20 emails or something," says Dan Bitney, one of the two Tortoise members who still call Chicago home. "Then there's always someone at the end like me today: 'Oh my God, I can't go to the meeting. I have to go get a tooth pulled.' "

Tortoise performing at Outset in West Town last year. Says band member John Herndon of playing with the Philharmonic: "I am excited to just be immersed in that sound world."

PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA SANDERS

Indeed, Bitney, a multi-instrumentalist like everyone else in the band, had to reschedule our interview due to an emergency trip to the dentist. But don't take his teeth-pulling woes as a metaphor. Tortoise – which also comprises Chicagoan Douglas McCombs and three West Coasters, L.A.-based Jeff Parker and John Herndon and Portlander John McEntire – still makes stunning and adventurous music, as proved by a new album, *Touch*, out October 24. It's the group's first in nine years and its debut on the Chicago experimental-music label International Anthem.

The 10 instrumental tracks bear many of the hallmarks that made Tortoise a core part of Chicago's musical renaissance in the '90s: hypnotic, complex grooves (the band has three drummers), tempos that change mid-song, and, on the longer tracks, melodies that seem to take you to points unknown. This 2025 edition of Tortoise gives prominence to the synthesizers, which are harmonious and searching – until they're not. It's often joyful music that seems particularly well suited for the band's show November 11 at the Auditorium Theatre alongside the Chicago Philharmonic, the only such collaboration on the tour.

The concert will reflect a band that has evolved since its early loft days. "We lived in just kind of an empty part of town – you know, Chicago really had a lot of that," says Bitney, who plays synthesizers, drums, and vibraphone. "How Chicago felt then directly influenced the murky, dark, minimalist music that was our first record."

Since that 1994 debut, the band's music became more layered and sometimes jazz-inflected, thanks to the addition of Parker on the seminal 1998 album, *TNT*. The Auditorium show, though, will be the first time Tortoise plays with such large-scale accompaniment. "Other than high school, I've never performed with a large orchestra," says Herndon, who plays synthesizers, drums, and other percussion. "I am excited to just be immersed in that sound world."

To make their music work with 30 or so members of the Philharmonic, the band naturally needed new arrangements. Those were provided by Parker, who has extensive experience as a jazz composer and has also scored several documentaries. (He got some help from friends in other indie bands, including Sean O'Hagan of the High Llamas and Nate Walcott of Bright Eyes.) "Some of the stuff we're getting sent, there's new parts entirely," Bitney says. "It never really occurred to me that they'd be adding melodic elements or these abstract kind of stabs. I'm just in awe of the whole thing."

The Auditorium concert also serves as an album-release show, given that it drops on streaming platforms the same day. The band recorded parts of *Touch* at Electrical Audio not long after the death of Steve Albini, the legendary engineer who built the Avondale studio and collaborated with everyone from Nirvana to hundreds of indie bands. "You can feel Steve's presence in everything there – the love that he poured into it," Herndon says. "It was at Electrical where the new music really started to take shape, and where we all felt like, Oh, OK, now we have a record."

The band will have two days to prepare with the Philharmonic – a rehearsal and a sound check. "It's pretty quick," says Bitney. "But I imagine they're all really good at what they do, you know?" The same can be said for Tortoise. ◼

AGENDA

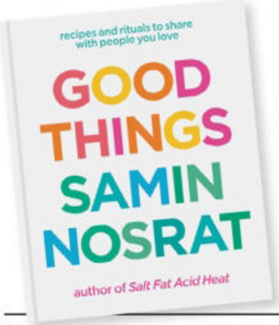
Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By WEB BEHRENS

SCALING HEIGHTS
The local chamber group D-Composed, which devotes itself to performing pieces by Black composers, glides into a three-night residency at Steppenwolf. *Nov. 6–9. steppenwolf.org*

A POSE BY ANY OTHER NAME
In *The Capulets*, a world premiere from Chicago Repertory Ballet founder Wade Schaaf, the star-crossed lovers take a back seat to the machinations of Juliet's mother and hotheaded Tybalt. *Nov. 7–16. chicagorepertoryballet.com*

SONGS FOR A MINOR
Tony-lauded *Hell's Kitchen*, the Alicia Keys jukebox musical about a piano prodigy growing up in Manhattan, comes to the Nederlander. *Nov. 11–30. broadwayinchicago.com*


recipes and rituals to share with people you love
GOOD THINGS
SAMIN NOSRAT
author of *Salt Fat Acid Heat*

SALT, FAT, ACID MEET
James Beard Award–winning author Samin Nosrat chats about her new cookbook, *Good Things*, with Chicago scholar Eve L. Ewing at the Athenaeum. *Nov. 12. chicagohumanities.org*

IN FORTUNA VERITAS
Decades of questionable use in Hollywood scores have warped the irreverent Latin of *Carmina Burana*. Feel the lusty-monk thrill when Lyric Opera returns Carl Orff's masterpiece to its booming glory. *Nov. 14–18. lyricopera.org*

STRIKING WHILE THEY'RE HOT
Chicago prog rockers Post Animal cap their big year—the acclaimed album *Iron*, an international tour—with a homecoming concert at Thalia Hall. *Nov. 18. postanimal.us/tour-dates*

THE BALLAD OF JOHN AND YOKO
In conjunction with its exhibition *Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind*, the MCA screens *One to One: John & Yoko*, a 2024 doc with previously unseen footage of the avant-garde supercouple. *Nov. 18. mcachicago.org*

REAP OF FAITH
The yearlong exhibit *American Prophets* features authors' spiritual artifacts: Flannery O'Connor's rosary, Harold Ramis's pocket-size *Five-Minute Buddhist*, Ursula K. Le Guin's annotated Tao Te Ching, and more. *Opens Nov. 21. americanwritersmuseum.org*

CRAZY IN LOVE
Set in Victorian London, the classic thriller *Gaslight* is best known for spawning a verb about psychological manipulation. Now it illuminates Skokie's Northlight stage. *Nov. 28–Dec. 28. northlight.org*

DISCO-ROCK SYMPHONY
Seventies-infused soul man Neal Francis plans a special sonic event for his hometown: *Francis Comes Again*, a concert spectacular with a 20-piece ensemble. *Nov. 29. saltshedchicago.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (*CAPULETS*) TODD ROSENBERG; (*HELL'S KITCHEN*) MARC J. FRANKLIN; (BOOK) CHICAGO HUMANITIES; (*CARMINA BURANA*) JOHN SHAW; (*ONE TO ONE*) MAGNOLIA PICTURES; (FRANCIS) JACK KARNATZ

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The Duck Inn's rotisserie duck dinner

Thanksgiving Feast, Chicago-Style

From salumi trays to hot chocolate, here's how to add local flavor to the big meal. By CHANDRA RAM

Photograph by LUCY HEWETT

Charcuterie from Lardon
Spicy coppa
Truffled lardo
Salame piccante

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Foxglove
GOOD FOOD
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GIARDONNAISE
GIARDINIERA MAYO
NET 12 FL OZ (355 ML)

Appetizers

Begin your quest to create the ultimate Midwestern charcuterie plate by stopping in at Logan Square's **Lardon** for a variety of regional salumi. Customize a board by ordering familiars like salame piccante and spicy coppa, but don't miss out on the truffled lardo, a delectable spread made from cured fatback, with a touch of luxe from black truffles. Be sure to add focaccia, onion jam, beer mustard, and pickles.

For the dairy side of things, swing by **Beautiful Rind**, a few blocks away. (Both places also deliver.) Curate your own cheese board, or rely on the expertise of owner Randall Felts and his team. Try the approachable, nutty Prairie Breeze cheddar from Iowa's Milton Creamery and the Little Lucy Brie, which is triple-cream-like, from Minnesota's Redhead Creamery. But also raise your game with the übergooey, funky Foxglove by Indianapolis's Tulip Tree Creamery. The folks here can add on wine and beer to pair with your selections.

To brighten the flavors of the meat and cheese, stop by **J.P. Graziano Grocery** in the West Loop for jarred hot muffuletta. And to accompany it all, order a bag of lightly spicy chile-crisp sourdough crackers from local food-writer-turned-baker Laura Yee's **Chinese Mom Kitchen** (thechinesemomkitchen.com).

The Bird

One secret to a browned, moist turkey: Coat it with mayonnaise before it hits the oven. May we suggest the locally made **Giardonnaise**, a mash-up with Chicago's favorite condiment that adds gentle tangy spice without overpowering the meat? (Pick up a bottle at Gene's Sausage Shop, Publican Quality Meats, and other markets around the city or order online at giardonnaise.com). Pro tip: Use your fingers to separate the skin and meat and spread the mayo in between, then add a layer on the exterior, so the bird bastes as it roasts.

Thinking ahead to leftovers: A tray of take-and-bake croissants from Lincoln Park pastry shop **Floriole** will ensure your day-after turkey sandwiches are just as glorious as the main event.

Not much of a cook? If you aren't hung up on tradition — or want something that feels a bit more elegant and extra — order the superb rotisserie duck dinner ($85) from **The Duck Inn** in Bridgeport for your meal's centerpiece. Each slow-roasted duck comes with roasted potatoes and kale tossed with duck fat. It's perfect for a group of four or as a second main course that won't take up all the space in your oven. Preorder from the restaurant (or from Goldbelly for shipping).

PHOTOGRAPHY: (LARDON) CLAYTON HAUCK; (POTATO CHIPS) JEFF MARINI; (CORN MUFFINS) LUCY HEWETT; (SOURDOUGH) ONE OFF HOSPITALITY; (ALL OTHERS) COURTESY OF STORES

Sides

Thanksgiving sides are sacrosanct (ever had to explain why you skipped the mashed potatoes?), but you can enhance the classics with some local touches.

Give those potatoes, whether mashed or roasted, a peppery, herby edge with a pinch of Bridgeport potato seasoning from the **Spice House**, with stores in Old Town, Evanston, and Naperville.

If green bean casserole is in your family's playbook, snag a bag of **Local Style Potato Chips** (available at many stores around town; check localstylechips.com for locations) in the Chicago hot dog or hot giardiniera flavors; crush and scatter them on top with the fried onions for a little extra crunch.

Head to **Publican Quality Meats** in the West Loop to glam up your roast vegetables and potatoes with some of chef Rob Levitt's duck and goose fat. While there, pick up acclaimed baker Greg Wade's sourdough to use in your stuffing.

Then, at Avondale's **Honey Butter Fried Chicken**, snag a packet of corn muffin mix to bake at home and a tub of sweet-salty honey butter to serve with it.

THE SPICE HOUSE
Bridgeport
POTATO SEASONING
LOCAL STYLE POTATO CHIPS
Chicago
DEEP DISH PIZZA
ITALIAN BEEF
MINDY'S
BAKERY
HOT CHOCOLATE
SMOOTH
CREAMY

Bridgeport potato seasoning from the Spice House

Corn muffins from Honey Butter Fried Chicken

Hot chocolate from Mindy's Bakery

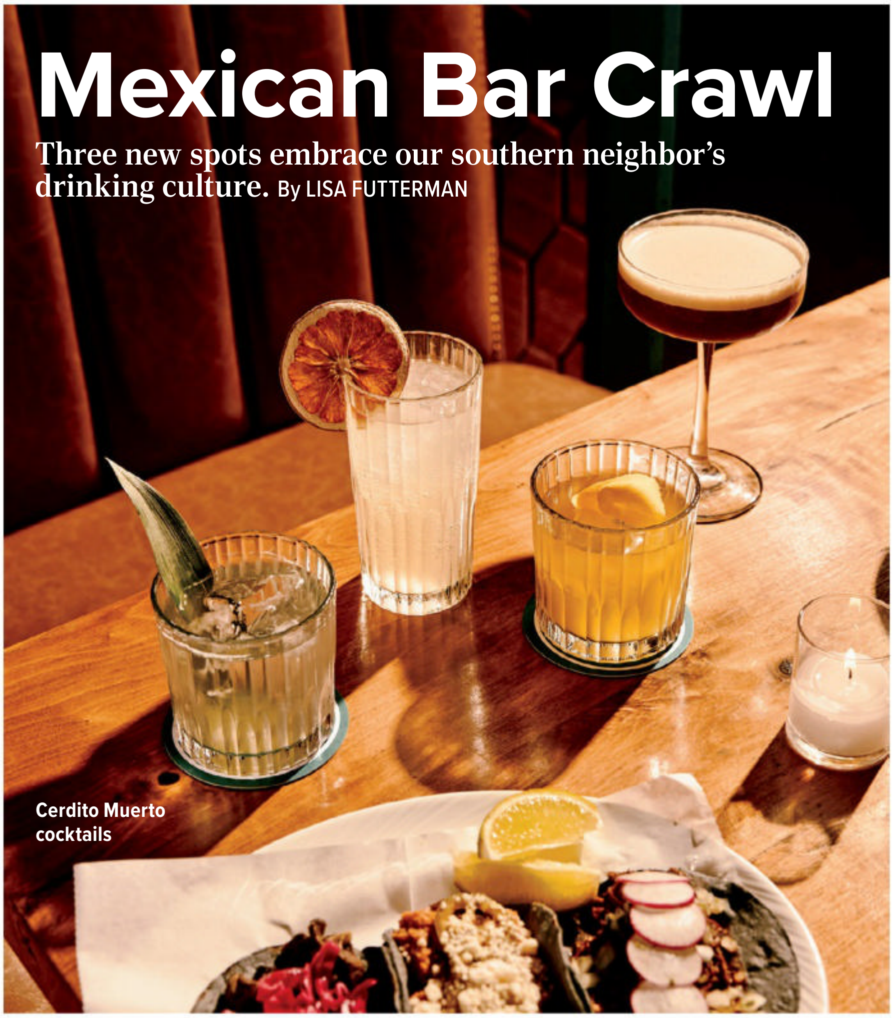
Sourdough from Publican Quality Meats

Dessert

You can't go wrong with the sweet potato pie from **Brown Sugar Bakery** in Greater Grand Crossing, lemon pecan pie from **Kasama** in East Ukrainian Village, or apple crumble pie from **Daisies** in Logan Square. Stock up for postdinner grazing with a cookie tray and hot chocolate from **Mindy's Bakery** in Bucktown. Any—or all!—would make a perfect capper to your Chicago-inflected Thanksgiving feast.

Mexican Bar Crawl

Three new spots embrace our southern neighbor's drinking culture. By LISA FUTTERMAN



Cerdito Muerto cocktails

WITH MEXICAN SPIRITS *MUY DE MODA* IN TODAY'S COCKTAIL WORLD, bars specializing in them have been popping up here of late. Let's take a drinking tour of three such newcomers: a homey Pilsen spot, an easy-going eatery with great drinks, and a CDMX-style lounge.

First up: **Cerdito Muerto** (1700 S. Halsted St., Pilsen), which Emidio Oceguera, former general manager of Chicago Cut, debuted in June in the building he grew up in. Note the comfy stools and banquettes, the kitchen where his mom's used to be, and the 100 bottles of mezcal and tequila on the wall. Drinks include Mexican wines and Casa Humilde's Latin beers on draft. Not to be missed: Palomas with housemade Squirt.

Next head north to **La Lunita** (2539 N. Milwaukee Ave., Logan Square), which Samantha Sanchez, who is also behind La Luna, opened in June. She painted the building a bright tangerine, opened up a welcoming front window, and installed chef Marco Colin to serve modern Mexican dishes alongside Mexican wines and cocktails like El Tio Tranquis, a spicy Negroni with mezcal and morita chile vermouth.

End the night at **Botanero** (1413 N. Ashland Ave., Noble Square), a moody half-underground space that opened last October. Marco Velazquez, formerly of Fulton Market Kitchen, serves classics like Caipirinhas and originals like a spicy sotol number with cucumber cordial. He uses kitschy glassware and black-light ice cubes that make the drinks glow. Late-night crowds pack in for burlesque and DJs, making this the perfect spot to close out our crawl.

THE PERFECT ORDER

Sugar and Spice

Filipino and Indian flavors converge at Sarima Cafe.

If you stop in at this new Bucktown venture (1924 W. North Ave.) from Zubair Mohajir and Jacob Dela Cruz—the team behind Lilac Tiger and Coach House—and pastry chef Reema Patel of Mariscos San Pedro, try these four items.

1. CALAMANSI SHRIKHAND DOUGHNUT

For this bright and tangy sweet, Patel took inspiration from a Boston cream doughnut, making the filling with northern Indian yogurt, cardamom, sugar, and calamansi. She glazes the top with a white chocolate and calamansi ganache. *$6*

2. KAAJU LATTE

This layered chilled latte, equal parts date and brown sugar syrup, cashew milk, and honey-whipped espresso, is finished with chai spices. Mix it all up before taking a sip. *$7*

3. BREAKFAST SANDO

The halal breakfast sandwich sells out early for a reason. Made with a deep-fried hash brown square, souffléed egg, garlic aïoli with achar, and a chicken and beef bacon sausage patty seasoned with annatto and pineapple, it's served on a potato bun. *$11.50*

4. UBE COOKIE

Ube is all over the menu: in a latte, in ice cream, and in this powdered-sugar-coated crinkle treat, which is filled with vanilla cheesecake. *$5* –LIZ GROSSMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CERDITO MUERTO) JACLYN RIVAS; (SARIMA CAFE) LUCY HEWETT

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Zarella's artisan with mushrooms and basil (top left) and tavern-style with soppressata and mortadella

Zarella

REVIEW

Pizza Party

Our critic checks out two new spots making waves with tavern-style pies—and becomes a fan. By JOHN KESSLER

TO MY WAY OF THINKING, there are only two kinds of pizza. The first is the simple type: Neapolitan but also any pizza you'd eat in Europe and, for the most part, that Italian immigrants brought to the East Coast.

The second kind is a pleasure delivery system, an orgy of flavor, a textural marvel of crispness and goo, all designed to make your head explode. This is the pizza of the Midwest, invented by cheese lovers. It's not precisely a satisfying meal because you always want more, even when you're feeling green from eating too much. Think of deep dish, sure, but also stuffed crust, butter crust, Detroit pan, St. Louis with that weird Provel, and Chicago thin, the new darling that everyone around the country now obsesses over.

Is it "thin," or is it "tavern style," the term currently in vogue? Does it matter? The real news is that we're living in its golden age, making us the center of today's pizza universe. While homage gets paid to the godfathers of thin, Vito & Nick's and Pat's, diners are obsessing over the new generation. More technique goes into today's creations, and heads are exploding like never before.

The pizzerati is particularly enamored with Pizz'amici, a West Town restaurant that opened last November. It's from Billy and Cecily Federighi, the young couple who have done more than anyone to refine this style and create excitement around it. They and housemate Brad Shorten began with a pop-up through their Instagram (@eatfreepizza). Soon fans could buy their crackery pies at Pizza Fried Chicken Ice Cream in Bridgeport. Next the trio decamped to suburban Westmont to open Kim's Uncle Pizza. After a viral *New York Times* story got people around the country slavering, their pizza became the golden fleece of Chicago dining. Without the option of delivery or online ordering, patrons drove hours, waited patiently, and prayed just to try it.

Shorten remains in Westmont, but the Federighis have split off and settled into a good groove at Pizz'amici. A table is a hot ticket but not impossible, particularly if you're willing to eat late. Behind the red neon sign lies a perfect little room – noisy, warm, and boxy, with precisely the number of seats (42) it can comfortably fit.

A limited number of pies are available for carryout, but for those who dine in, there's booze and pretty swift appetizers. The Caesar salad with breadcrumbs is a gamble – it can be overdressed or a thing of lemony beauty – but worth the risk. The house focaccia is a marvel: two inches high, all stretchy puff and oily, crunchy crust – and even better alongside sweet-sour eggplant caponata.

The focaccia uses a biga – a pre-fermented starter – while the pizza is made with a sourdough starter that's naturally

Photography by LUCY HEWETT

fermented and cured for seven days. It's a tweak from the Kim's Uncle recipe, and fans argue the difference. I get the obsession because it has a texture you both know and have never had. It's well done, with a little snap. The pies boom with flavor from the crust's tang, the caramelized tomato sauce, and the browned sharp provolone-mozz mix. Get pep cups if you want (they're good!), but don't miss the sausage and giardiniera.

I should point out that the pleasure I derive from this pizza is matched only by the amount of fat that goes into it. When I brought a pie home, it congealed into a firm mass during the 10-minute ride but reclaimed much of its former glory after a reheat. Three squares in, my brain pleaded for more, while my stomach begged me to stop.

In comparison, the thin crust at Zarella Pizzeria & Taverna in River North, which opened in March, isn't quite as tasty but is something I could eat on the regular. The tavern-style is thinner and drier than that of Pizz'amici, Novel, Dicey's, and other party-cut newbies; a stubble of cornmeal on its undercarriage enhances the tug and crackle of the crust.

Chris Pandel's innovation is using Italian 00 flour (the same required in Neapolitan crusts), which contributes to its unusually supple texture. Pandel (Swift & Sons) is one of two chefs at this Boka Restaurant Group joint. The other, Lee Wolen (Boka), contributes an "artisan" pizza, a version of the one he serves at Alla Vita. Take your pick, or order from the roster of Italian American dishes. Zarella aims to please.

This restaurant gets you at hello with thoughtful cocktails like the Suze Sbagliato and by-the-glass wines that hit every niche (love the chilled Nebbiolo). Appetizers are a dream: calamari as tender, greaseless, and crisp as it gets, a hummus-y roasted carrot dip with a platter of crackers and crudités. A stack of shredded, tender kale in bright Caesar dressing shows how it's done.

But judging from a mealy chicken piccata, I'd stick to pizza for your main. As much as I enjoy the thin, I crush on the artisan, which is the idealized version of the crust I grew up eating in a part of America (the mid-Atlantic) not known for pizza. It has a crisp bottom and a puffed rim you'll want to eat all of. This plus a salad, a glass of red, and good company is my ideal dinner.

Pizz'amici's sausage and giardiniera

One caveat: You, too, may feel the need to select the toppings yourself. I've yet to try a specialty pie that works as is. The soppressata and mortadella with hot honey and arugula was too spicy and salty, while the mushroom-truffle had an unannounced Sour Patch Kids hit of dreaded balsamic drizzle. But sautéed mushrooms with sausage? Now that's the ticket.

PIZZ'AMICI
★★
1215 W. Grand Ave., West Town
■ **Tip** Plan early for carryout. You book a pickup slot, and prime times go fast.

ZARELLA PIZZERIA & TAVERNA
★★½
531 N. Wells St., River North
■ **Tip** No reservations left? There's (almost) always space for walk-ins.

★ Recommended
★★ Very good ★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Exceptional

The decor aims for a kind of ready-made Italian restaurant look, with checkered tiles, tufted leather booths, and walls crammed with framed pictures. It's all a bit Maggiano's. Ask for a table downstairs. That space is cool, like its own mini-restaurant, with a scattering of tables and a snug bar. In fact, it's just the right place to celebrate this golden age of Chicago pizza.

NEIGHBORHOOD FIND

Snack Attack

IZAKAYA SHINYA
2255 W. North Ave., Wicker Park
■ **Perfect order** Takoyaki, hamachi kama, wagyu yakitori

■ In Tokyo, students, coworkers, and pals will gather at an izakaya to drink beer and highballs, snack on yakitori, and hang out until the last train home. Hugo Leung, who owns Bridgeport's Shinya Ramen House, tapped this spirit two years ago to open Izakaya Shinya, where he serves Japanese bites and drinks to after-work and late-night crowds.

In true izakaya spirit, Shinya is open only from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. and everything on the Walmart-size menu is under $20 and shareable. There's a hit list of yakitori, skewers of grilled meat and vegetables. I love the wagyu, which arrives on its own little robata charcoal grill; the crunchy brûléed sweet potato; and the offbeat chicken bits, like torikawa (skin), hatsu (heart), and sunagimo (gizzard).

While the cooking can be inconsistent and the cocktails skew sweet (opt instead for Chika cup sake or a Sapporo draft), the grilled hamachi kama (yellowtail collar) is as delectable as any I've found in town, and the takoyaki, an octopus fritter with katsuobushi flakes waving on top, is textbook.

As you snack, soak up the Nippon-style vibe, with flowered paper umbrellas and lanterns strung across the ceiling and pillow-strewn booths separated by tapestries. Service is always steady and warm, even as karaoke blasts through the space after dinnertime on Fridays and Saturdays. —LISA FUTTERMAN

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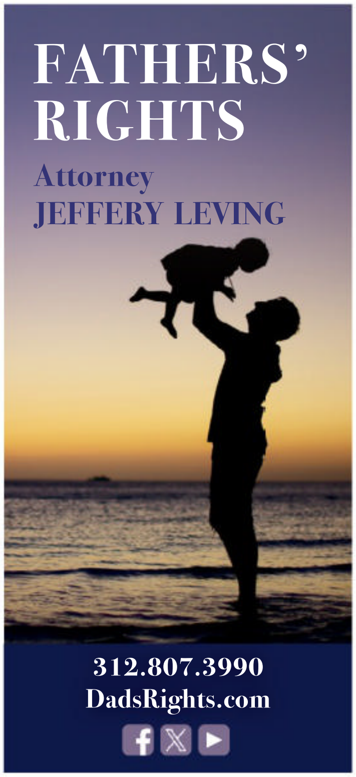
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The Hot List

10 places everyone's talking about (in order of heat)

Creepies

Ithaki Estiatorio

1 **CREEPIES What** A new Midwestern-inspired bistro from the Elske team. **Why** We'll eat anywhere David and Anna Posey are cooking. **Where** *1360 W. Randolph St., West Loop*

2 **ADALINA PRIME What** Yet another steakhouse? (See page 48.) **Why** This one comes from the team behind the Gold Coast's Adalina and has a gorgeous design. **Where** *360 N. Green St., West Loop*

3 **DIMMI DIMMI What** A classic red-sauce Italian spot. **Why** Cool nights call for comfort food. **Where** *1112 W. Armitage Ave., Lincoln Park*

4 **MILLI BY METRIC What** An all-day café from one of the city's top roasters. **Why** You can sip single-origin espressos while exploring the serious pastry program from an Obélix alum. **Where** *3110 N. Kedzie Ave., Logan Square*

5 **LITTLE LARK What** A pizza spot at Guild Row from the Meadowlark team. **Why** A wood-fired za topped with Lardon salumi and a round of cocktails sounds like a good night. **Where** *3132 N. Rockwell St., Avondale*

6 **ITHAKI ESTIATORIO What** A new Greek joint opens in the Parthenon space. **Why** Naturally, there will be saganaki. **Where** *314 S. Halsted St., Greektown*

7 **SHO What** Mari Katsumura, veteran of Yugen and Grace, debuts an omakase. **Why** She's serving a seasonally changing 10-course menu with sushi and composed dishes. **Where** *1533 N. Wells St., Old Town*

8 **THE WESTERN BAR & KITCHEN What** A Southwestern spot with oyster chiles rellenos and tequila drinks. **Why** We don't see this type of cuisine in town very often. **Where** *4301 N. Western Ave., North Center*

9 **LUELLA'S SOUTHERN KITCHEN What** Darnell Reed's delightful Southern restaurant returns in a new location. **Why** Faves like biscuits and gravy are back on the brunch-only menu. **Where** *4114 N. Kedzie Ave., Albany Park*

10 **SMASH JIBARITO What** The pop-up favorite opens a storefront. **Why** If you haven't had their delish smashburger-jibarito hybrid, you're missing out. **Where** *2534 W. Division St., Humboldt Park*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CREEPIES) HUGE GALDONES; (ITHAKI ESTIATORIO) MADN AGENCY

IN THE KITCHEN

Family Flavors

IF MARGARET PAK COULD WRITE HER STORY in food, kadala curry – a comforting stew of black chickpeas in coconut gravy – would be a recurring motif. "It's pretty near and dear," the Thattu chef says, noting it first entered the plot as breakfast shared in the home of her in-laws in Kerala, India, and has been the sole menu constant throughout the restaurant's metamorphosis from pop-up to food hall stall to brick-and-mortar. In other words, it's a dish with depth built not only on a slow cook and warm spices but also on layers of memory. – CATE HUGUELET

THATTU'S KADALA CURRY

Makes 2 servings
Active time 1 hour 15 minutes
Total time 2 hours, plus 8 hours for soaking chickpeas

¾	cup dried kala chana (black chickpeas)
2¾	tsp. kosher salt, divided, plus more for seasoning
1	tsp. coriander powder
1	tsp. Kashmiri chile powder
2	tsp. meat masala (like MDH brand)
½	tsp. turmeric
½	tsp. black pepper
6	Tbsp. coconut powder
1	Tbsp. coconut oil
1	tsp. mustard seeds
2	cups julienned red onion
2	sprigs curry leaves, stems removed
1½	tsp. minced serrano chile
1½	tsp. minced ginger
1½	tsp. minced garlic
1½	cups diced tomatoes
⅓	cup coconut milk

1

Cook the chickpeas: Place chickpeas in a large bowl and add cold water to cover by 3 inches. Soak for 8 hours, then drain and rinse. Place chickpeas in an Instant Pot with 1½ cups water and 2 teaspoons salt. Cook in high pressure for 25 minutes, then allow pressure to release naturally. Drain and reserve liquid. Set aside.

2

Dry-roast the spices: Heat a small pan over medium-low. Add coriander and toast, stirring frequently, until darkened, about 30 seconds. Stir in Kashmiri chile powder, meat masala, turmeric, and black pepper and immediately transfer spice mix to a small bowl and set aside.

3

Make the coconut paste: Wipe out the pan and return to medium-low heat. Add coconut powder and toast, stirring frequently, until browned, about 3 minutes. Cool, then process in a spice grinder until a paste forms. Set aside.

4

Cook the onions: In a medium pot set over medium, heat coconut oil until it shimmers. Add mustard seeds. When they begin to pop, about 30 seconds, add onions and ¾ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are deep brown and reduced by three-quarters, about 45 minutes.

5

Make the curry: Stir coconut paste into onions and cook until oil begins to separate, about 3 minutes. Add curry leaves, serrano chile, ginger, and garlic and cook until the raw smell dissipates, about 1 minute. Stir in spice mix, followed by tomatoes and ½ cup chickpea liquid. When gravy has a spaghetti-sauce-like consistency, about 8 minutes, add chickpeas and return to a simmer. Stir in coconut milk and simmer, thinning with more chickpea liquid if needed. Taste, add salt if desired, and serve.

Photograph by JEFF MARINI

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Monument Man

The city's go-to restorer has worked on everything from two particular bronze lions (you know the ones) to ancient rock art.

By JOANNA MARSZAŁEK

I WAS READING A NEWSPAPER ONE DAY WHEN AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH caught my eye. It showed a hot summer day in Chicago. Barefoot children were playing in a splash pool and climbing a giant stylized sculpture of a bull. The photo was taken in front of the Jane Addams Homes in Little Italy, not far from where I live. The bull was one of seven art deco sculptures in Chicago designer Edgar Miller's *Animal Court*, which had stood outside the public housing complex until most of those buildings were demolished in the early 2000s.

I hadn't lived in the neighborhood long enough to share it with Miller's limestone animals. But I soon learned that the sculptures hadn't been lost: They were being restored by a man named Andrzej Dajnowski, who was working on refurbishing them ahead of their installation at the new National Public Housing Museum.

Last year, I visited Dajnowski at his studio in suburban Forest Park, where I came face to face with Miller's creations. A buffalo, a bear, and a ram stood next to a wall near a window, surrounded by buckets of tools and cleaning solutions. The nose of the giant bull, the largest of the group, peeked out from plastic wrap.

Dajnowski has been taking care of local public art for nearly 35 years, first as an employee of and now as a contractor for the Chicago Park District and the Art Institute of Chicago. He's the city's top conservator of monuments, sculptures, and fountains – the guy you trust to preserve and clean Chicago's finest public works. Not least the Art Institute's iconic lions. "You can imagine what a decision that was for the institution," says Rachel Sabino, the museum's director of objects and textiles conservation. "There really is no one we trust more for this type of work locally than Andrzej."

Tapped by municipalities, institutions, and private collectors, Dajnowski cleans, shines, repairs, regilds, and even recreates pieces, often taking them apart and putting them back together. "Everything he touches, he's thinking generations ahead: How is his fingerprint going to help that piece survive in the long term for prosperity?" says Michael Fus, a preservation architect with the Chicago Park District who oversees the agency's 200 monuments and sculptures and has worked with Dajnowski for more than 28 years.

Dajnowski's studio – a gray low-rise with just a few small windows – resembles a large garage, and in it are all sorts of treasures: dozens of century-old lamps from the U.S. Supreme Court, a chandelier from the Art Institute, samples of decorative ceiling from the former Carson Pirie Scott store on State Street, and a private collector's sculpture of a skinny black rabbit that Dajnowski says is worth more than his studio. Soft-spoken with a calm demeanor, Dajnowski has blue eyes and a sharp gaze. Though he travels often for business, he prefers to labor here in the quiet. He points out the different materials he works with: bronze, wood, stones of various kinds.

Dajnowski came to Chicago in 1985 from Gdańsk, Poland, which in those days was engulfed in political turmoil, including protests against the authoritarian Communist government. As a student at a fine arts college, he steered clear of the Solidarity movement, which swept the campus. He recalls

Andrzej Dajnowski, shown in his Forest Park studio, has been entrusted to refurbish some of Chicago's finest public art.
↓

Photograph by LYNDON FRENCH

witnessing city crews clear away sand soaked with blood from street clashes. A friend was injured by a flare gun. Another lost his leg after it got caught between a train and a platform as he fled from ZOMO, a paramilitary squad known for its brutality. For Dajnowski, newly a father, Poland was a harrowing place. "I could not imagine my son growing up in this climate. It was a little too much to take."

Then he did "something stupid," as he puts it: He called a policeman "a Gestapo." He was arrested and threatened with a five-year prison sentence. But by a stroke of luck, a few months later, Dajnowski obtained a visa to go to America, where his mother lived. Plans for a doctorate in art conservation had to be put off. He still wonders why the Communist government let him go: "Maybe they just wanted to get rid of me."

He arrived in Chicago with his wife, their 2-year-old son, and a master's in sculpture – but without the ability to speak English. He took a cleaning job with other Polish immigrants. The money was decent, but he wanted something more, so he began working as a woodcarver in a frame shop, where he practiced English with a Native American coworker.

> **"Each of these projects is like a child to him," says a preservationist.**

A year and a half after his arrival, Dajnowski was accepted to Harvard's postgraduate conservation program. There he had access to some of the field's top experts – and the opportunity to intern at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., which led to a contract as a coordinator of the museum's exhibit on the information age. He maintained hundreds of artifacts, including the original Morse key, the first telephones, and a Polish *bomba* – a machine used to break Germany's Enigma cipher.

Soon enough, he moved to Chicago for a job with the park district, taking care of its monuments. Fus remembers the first time they worked together, on a major restoration of the 18-foot-tall bronze Goethe sculpture in Lincoln Park in 1998. It involved cleaning, removing the patina, and restoring the finish to a dark brown. "He is very much a perfectionist," says Fus. "Every detail is thought out."

After about a decade at the agency, Dajnowski opened his own company, keeping as clients his old employers – the park district and the Art Institute, which had covered half his salary – while extending his expertise to others around the country. He increasingly turned to laser cleaning, a specialized technique that was uncommon at the time. In 2005, he employed that method on Chicago's Driehaus Museum, then called the Nickerson House, making it the first building in North America to be cleaned by laser. These days, most of his cleaning projects involve lasers made by his son, Bartosz.

It's not technology, though, that makes Dajnowski so good at what he does – it's patience. He meticulously researches each project, often for years, like the near decade he spent experimenting before restoring Lorado Taft's *Fountain of Time*, a majestic sculpture in Washington Park. His work on it began in 1999. The main problem he had to solve: It was a 126-foot-long piece of concrete without any expansion joints – in other words, nothing to accommodate the material's inevitable expansion and contraction, which stressed the structure. ("Have you ever seen a sidewalk without cracks?" Dajnowski asks.) Over the years, the monument had been exposed to the elements, and the concrete had eroded to the point where it revealed structural damage underneath. Dajnowski studied the cracks and surface issues, analyzed temperature and humidity, and researched the concrete's characteristics. Corroded iron rebar was treated with titanium, and Dajnowski and his crew filled the cracks and resurfaced the sculpture with a special aggregate concrete he created.

Another time, he had to remove graffiti from Indigenous artwork in Texas dating back thousands of years – without touching it. The Native American leaders involved had stressed that he couldn't risk damaging the pictographs on rocks in Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site, near El Paso, so Dajnowski used spectroscopy to determine the chemical composition of their pigments and of the graffiti paint. It's the same technique used to restore fine art paintings. In his studio, he created mockups, and he and Bartosz experimented with lasers to determine the precise settings for removing only the graffiti layer. It took two years of research to pull it off.

Plenty of new challenges await Dajnowski in his studio. One of the original pair of bovines in *Bull and Indian Maiden* – stolen from Garfield Park, damaged, and recovered – has sat here patiently for 15 years, awaiting funds to be restored and returned to its partner's side. (When it went missing, Dajnowski was hired to create a replacement, which now sits in Garfield Park, only for the damaged bull to be discovered in New York.) Two bronze eagles will remain here until money is found to repair the deteriorating twin fountains where they normally perch at Michigan Avenue and Ida B. Wells Drive. "Each of these projects is like a child to him," Fus says. "He feels very responsible for doing the right treatment."

Dajnowski won't pick a favorite child, but *Fountain of Time* holds a special place. The logo for his firm is inspired by the monument's Father Time figure, not just because Dajnowski spent so much time on the project, but because of what it represents. "It's a symbol of conservation," he says. "Because time can be a friend or enemy to many things."

Early this year, on a walk around my neighborhood, I spotted some familiar faces: Miller's animal sculptures. After 18 years in storage, they had returned to their home near Taylor Street, looking as if no time had passed at all.

Break the routine
uptravel.com
THE UPPER PENINSULA
MICHIGAN
O KUN-DE-KUN FALLS

THE BEST STEAKHOUSES IN TOWN

IN A SCENE THAT'S RAPIDLY EVOLVING, WITH SPLASHY NEWCOMERS AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES, **WE RANK OUR 12 FAVORITES.**

Plus

UNEXPECTED WINES, THE BEST POTATOES, LEFTOVERS TIPS, AND MORE.

BY AMY CAVANAUGH AND JOHN KESSLER

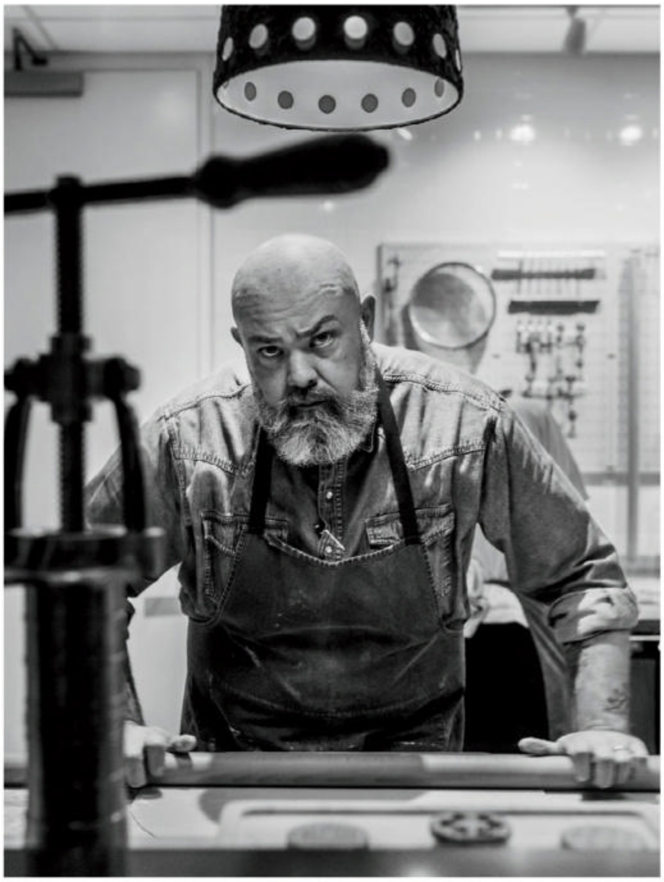
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEFF MARINI AND GARRETT SWEET

No. 1 Tre Dita and its bistecca alla Fiorentina

1. Tre Dita

401 E. WACKER DR., LOOP

▶ **In this era of big, glitzy steakhouses, there's nowhere we'd rather splurge than Tre Dita. Located on the second floor of the St. Regis Chicago, this Tuscan spot is a collaboration between Los Angeles chef Evan Funke (pictured) and Lettuce Entertain You. That hospitality group has long had its finger on what the dining public wants, and it's especially true here. Servers are knowledgeable and smooth, yet entirely approachable. We are enamored with the all-Italian wine list, but the cocktail program is equally great. The food is superb, whether it's thick tangles of pici cacio e pepe or the steaks, which Funke sears over a wood fire. The signature cut is the massive bistecca alla Fiorentina ($290), but the New York strip ($89) is so good—served sliced, drizzled with olive oil, and sprinkled with flaky salt—that if you opt for it, you won't feel like you missed out. And the sleek room features gorgeous views of the river and city. This place gets the modern steakhouse just right.** —A.C. 📷 G.S.



PHOTOGRAPHY: (FUNKE) JEFF MARINI; (PREVIOUS SPREAD) GARRETT SWEET

Cocktail Ice
Sold Here
Baked
CRAB
CAKE
famous
DUCHESS CUT

2.

Bavette’s Bar & Boeuf

218 W. KINZIE ST., RIVER NORTH

▶ Bavette’s reminds you in every detail that a steakhouse is about so much more than steak. Here, Hogsalt has perfected its low-lumen aesthetic of goth fantasia meets English tavern. Slip into a tufted leather booth amid a profusion of lampshades seeping golden light, and once your eyes adjust, you’ll note all that awaits – from the iced shellfish display at one end of the room to the golden-hued bar on the other. It’s all a bit off script, which is this restaurant’s signature charm. Maybe you want an offbeat steak, like a bone-in filet mignon, or perhaps you’re feeling the lobster frites. There’s an entire menu of old-fashioned variations, a terrifically deep wine list, and a cadre of servers who seem to glide through the dining room on wheels. If you can’t secure a reservation (still hard after 13 years), go early to snag seats at the bar. That’s almost more fun. – J.K. JACLYN RIVAS

Our New Favorite Steakhouse Martini

BY **AMY CAVANAUGH**

Martinis are standard on steakhouse menus, which means I have tried many over the years. But none have made an impression on me quite like the **El Che Martini**, a newbie from director of culture Jarod Boyer that fits this Argentine restaurant perfectly. Boyer uses a La Luna mezcal made specifically for El Che that incorporates a tomahawk steak into the distilling process. More minerally than beefy, it makes for an ideal base here and is balanced by herbaceous Barr Hill gin and citrusy La Fuerza Blanco vermouth from Argentina. Boyer then dots the top with vibrant green drops of chimichurri oil, adding a bright note of herbs to finish off a martini that could only be served at El Che.

Move Over, Napa Cab

THESE DAYS, STEAKHOUSE WINE LISTS GO WAY BEYOND CAB AND CHARDONNAY.

BY **ARI BENDERSKY**

▶ Here, five local sommeliers pair off-the-beaten-path favorites on their menus with classic dishes.

HANA MAKGEOLLI FORBIDDEN TAKJU

✚

WAGYU RIB EYE

Perilla's Thomas Oh: "It is made with an heirloom variety of black rice, and with its unfiltered finish, the texture pairs well with the rich coating of the palate the rib eye provides."

2021 RADIKON SIVI PINOT GRIGIO

✚

SHRIMP COCKTAIL

Boeufhaus's Jamie Finnegan: "This is my favorite orange wine pairing, and the herb and citrus of the court-bouillon we poach the shrimp in matches its notes."

2022 ELENA WALCH BEYOND THE CLOUDS ALTO ADIGE BIANCO

✚

COTOLETTA FRITTA

BEYOND
THE
CLOUDS
Elena Walch

Tre Dita's Kat Hawkins: "In Alto Adige, in that part of Italy, you will find German and Austrian influence, and the breaded and fried nature of this dish is a more Germanic way of cooking."

AYALA BRUT NATURE CHAMPAGNE ZÉRO DOSAGE

✚

28-DAY DRY-AGED BONE-IN RIB EYE

Maple & Ash's Amy Mundwiler: "The crisp acidity cuts through the fatty rib eye."

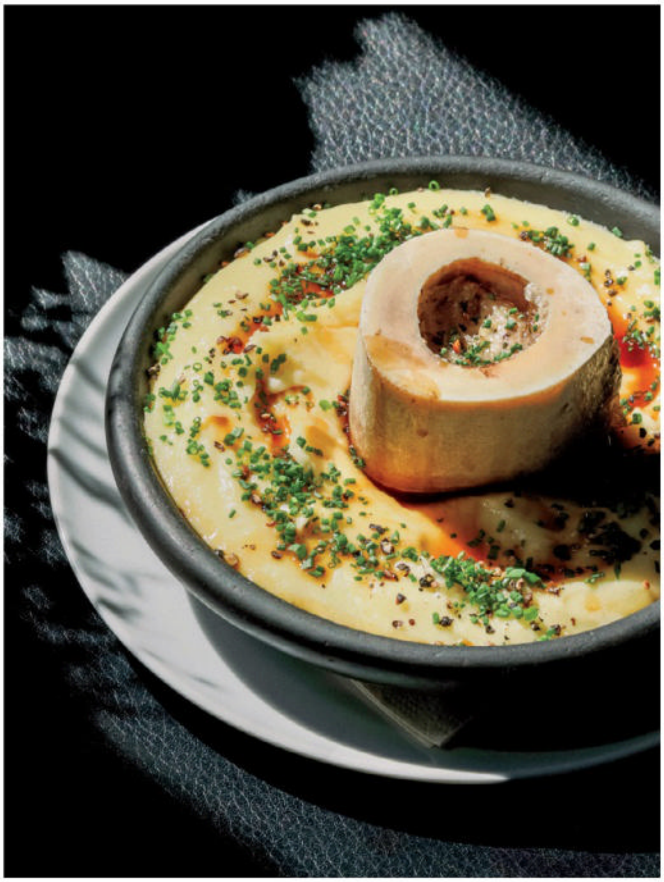
THE RARE WINE CO. BOSTON BUAL MADEIRA

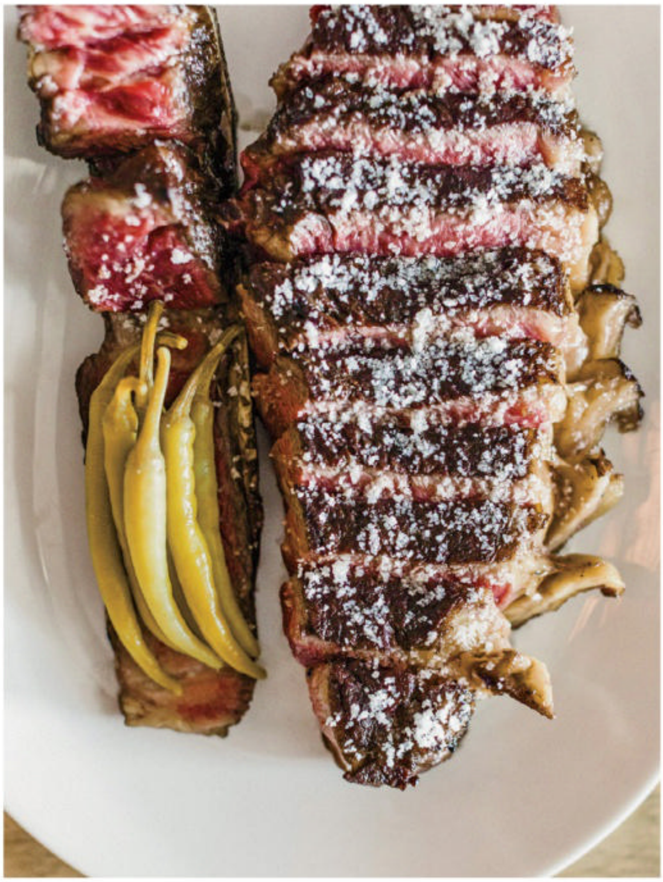
✚

ROASTED BONE MARROW

Hawksmoor's Dylan Estey: "The hazelnut quality of the wine accentuates the nuttiness of the bone marrow."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (MARTINI) GARRETT SWEET; (WINE) COURTESY OF VENDORS





3. Asador Bastian

214 W. ERIE ST., RIVER NORTH

▶ At Doug Psaltis's Basque-inspired steakhouse, tucked inside the 142-year-old Flair House, you don't order your standard filet or strip. Rather, a server comes to your table in the darkly intimate dining room proffering a silver tray on which the night's cuts are laid out for you to choose from. The beef on offer: four varieties of txuleton (Basque bone-in rib eyes), along with nightly specials, like Tajima (Pennsylvania-raised Japanese cattle) or Australian wagyu, all with little tags letting you know their weight and provenance. Select one and pay by the pound; it'll return perfectly cooked, sliced, and topped with a guindilla pepper. There are glam touches to accompany all this: caviar churros, truffle tortillas españolas, a chocolate-hazelnut cake adorned with gold leaf. Sound expensive? It is. But the experience here is unlike any other in town. –A.C. 📷 J.M.

4.

Gibsons Bar & Steakhouse

1028 N. RUSH ST., GOLD COAST

▶ The city's official street grid has Chicago spreading out in all directions from the corner of State and Madison, but let us tell you: The real heart of our town is the bar at Gibsons. The rotating cast of characters primes you for an iconic meal: the regulars, the smooth servers in their white coats, the piano player, the sad drunk, the retirees who traded in their Wilmette split-levels for high-rise condos, the tourists, the unnoticed celebs, the hangers-on. Here we are, too, with a shrimp cocktail and a basket holding soft bread and softer butter. Also, dirty martinis, each one really about two and a half martinis by volume. Maybe we'll order the famous W.R.'s Chicago Cut bone-in rib eye and a wedge salad (they'll chop and toss it if you ask). But first we'll sit here and just enjoy the scene. –J.K. 📷 J.M.

5.

El Che Steakhouse & Bar

845 W. WASHINGTON BLVD., WEST LOOP

▶ When you book here, ask to sit at the counter. Set next to the chefs, in front of the blazing Argentine asado grill, these two seats give you a front row to what John Manion and his team do so well. Anything that comes off that grill is deliciously charred and smoky, whether it's the rotating selection of steaks—maybe a boneless American wagyu rib eye or tira de asado (Argentine beef short ribs)—or especially the seafood, like oysters with Parmesan breadcrumbs and pickled Fresnos and the lobster tail with spicy butter and shallots (pictured). To drink: Start with the El Che Martini (see page 52). Then move onto sommelier Alex Cuper's superb South American wine list; you're guaranteed to find something you've never tried before. –A.C. 📷 G.S.

6. Gene & Georgetti

500 N. FRANKLIN ST., RIVER NORTH

▶ Chicagoans talk about this venerable corner joint (est. 1941) like it's the doddering old aunt of the city's steakhouse scene, a onetime hangout for power brokers that's now running on fumes. We've got news: It's really good again. Following the death of owner Tony Durpetti last year, his daughter, Michelle Durpetti, and her husband, Collin Pierson, have kept improving the menu with better ingredients and daily specials, like a roasted shrimp cocktail with aïoli. Try the handmade linguine with clams and the gorgeous crusted charbroiled steaks. The bar still hops with regulars, and the dining rooms wear their age like a dowager countess. This is steakhouse royalty. –J.K. 📷 J.M.

7. Maple & Ash

8 W. MAPLE ST., NEAR NORTH SIDE

▶ For 10 years this double-decker behemoth has defined a certain niche: steakhouse as scene. You go here not despite the high decibel level but because of it. You are there to be noticed. So dress up and party like it's 2015. The food is still good, the freebies still fun. Before you've even had a chance to crack the menu, you'll be greeted with a sweet citrus martini, a bowl of caviar-topped onion dip with ridged chips, and some scrumpdillyicious Parker House rolls slicked with butter, herbs, and spice – all gratis. Use that bread to soak up the garlic butter from your fire-roasted seafood tower. If you're too busy preening to choose your meal, go with the dealer's choice option called I Don't Give a F*@k (their symbols, not ours). In this case, it's not just the house that always wins. –J.K. 📷 G.S.

Hot Sauces

FORGET THE PEPPERCORN. STEAKHOUSES ARE GETTING CREATIVE WITH THEIR SAUCES, AND PROXI LEADS THE WAY. BY **LISA SHAMES**

▶ Chef Andrew Zimmerman breaks down Proxi's offerings, which tap Asian influences.

SSAMJANG BUTTER

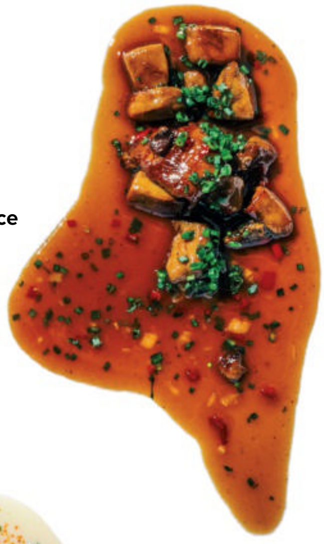
The gentle heat comes courtesy of a traditional Korean condiment of fermented soybeans, red chile paste, garlic, and green onions that chef de cuisine Jennifer Kim makes. "Jennifer can't help but ferment stuff."

SOY–BLACK GARLIC JUS

Inspired by Japanese yakitori sauces, Zimmerman cooks down roasted chicken jus with soy sauce and black garlic until it takes on the consistency of caramel. "A lot of savory and umami flavors," he says.

SICHUAN SALSA VERDE

A mash-up of Argentina's garlic-forward salsa verde and spicy-tingly Sichuan sauce. "Having a lot of herbs and acidity is one of my favorite ways to eat a steak."



FOIE GRAS TOYOMANSI

A traditional Filipino offering made of soy sauce and calamansi vinegar gets a luxe upgrade with foie gras trimmings.

MISO HOLLANDAISE

The white miso adds depth to a traditional sauce, and a food whipper keeps it hot and aerated. "I love a rich, thick hollandaise, but this one has a light texture that's less decadent—in a good way."

The Best Steakhouse Dishes That Aren't Steak

▶ **THE ALSTON**'s lobster tourte with Normandy sauce and morel mushrooms ▶ **ASADOR BASTIAN**'s salt-roasted carabineros ▶ **BAVETTE'S** wedge salad with egg, bacon, Gorgonzola, ranch, and onion ▶ **BAZAAR MEAT**'s Paletilla Ibérica De Bellota with chimichurri and mojo verde ▶ **BLVD**'s blistered asparagus with smoked trout roe, pickled shallot beurre blanc, and fines herbes ▶ **BOEUFHAUS**'s fried perch with sauerkraut and crème fraîche ▶ **EL CHE**'s lobster tail with diavola butter, pickled shallots, and scallions ▶ **GENE & GEORGETTI**'s linguine with clams ▶ **HAWKSMOOR**'s fried shrimp with jalapeño tartar sauce ▶ **JOE'S** fried chicken ▶ **MAPLE & ASH**'s Fork & Knife Caesar salad with wood-fired romaine, pecorino, soft-cooked egg, and savory sprinkles ▶ **PERILLA**'s monkey bread with gochujang-honey butter ▶ **RPM STEAK**'s baked Alaska ▶ **SOPHIA STEAK**'s grilled burger with sweet onion, aged white cheddar, and horseradish aïoli ▶ **TRE DITA**'s pici cacio e pepe with pecorino croccolo and black pepper

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF MARINI

The Leftover Remix

HOW TO PUT THOSE DOGGIE BAGS TO BETTER USE

BY **CHANDRA RAM**

▶ Yes, you can throw everything on a plate and zap it in the microwave, but we all know how that will end up — with overcooked meat and soggy sides. Here's a better idea: Use these easy-to-follow recipes to transform your leftovers into entirely new dishes in minutes.

If you have a leftover baked potato …

Loaded baked potato hash

Spoon off any toppings like bacon, sour cream, cheese, and chives and set them aside. Chop the baked potato into roughly one-inch pieces. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat, add the potato pieces, and cook until golden brown, flipping them over to crisp each side. Transfer pieces to a bowl, and gently toss with the toppings, adding more bacon, sour cream, cheese, and chives as desired. Fry an egg, then slide it on top of the hash. Voilà, breakfast is served.

If you have leftover creamed spinach …

Creamy spinach-artichoke dip

Grate one clove of garlic, then drain a 14-ounce can of artichoke hearts and coarsely chop them. Heat a teaspoon of oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Add the garlic and artichoke hearts and cook until the garlic is fragrant, about one minute. Add two cups of creamed spinach and an eight-ounce brick of cream cheese and stir, breaking up the cheese with a spoon, until melted. Add two ounces of shredded mozzarella and two ounces of grated Parmesan and stir until melted and the mixture is cohesive, about two minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and a pinch of red pepper flakes and season with salt and pepper. Serve with crackers or tortilla chips.

[redacted]

If you have leftover mashed potatoes …

Bubble and squeak

To make this British classic, heat a tablespoon of oil and a pat of butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add two cups of finely chopped vegetables (I like onion, carrot, and kale or cabbage, but use what you have). Cook until softened, about four minutes, then add a pinch each of salt and black pepper and two cups of the mashed potatoes. Flatten the potatoes with a spatula, then fold them into the vegetables until the ingredients are mixed together. Flatten this mixture into an even layer. Cook until the potatoes form a golden crust on the bottom, about five minutes. Use the spatula to fold the edges back into the center, then flatten into an even layer again. Cook until the bottom and edges are browned, then repeat the process one more time, adding a pat of butter to the pan if the ingredients start to stick. Slide the potato cake onto a plate and serve with sour cream and hot sauce, or top it with a fried egg.

If you have leftover steak …

Steak soba noodle salad

Thinly slice six to eight ounces of the steak and set it aside. In a large bowl, whisk together one teaspoon of sesame oil, the juice of one lime, a pinch of sugar, two teaspoons of rice wine vinegar, and two teaspoons of soy sauce. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil, add four ounces of soba noodles, and cook until the noodles are softened, three to five minutes, or according to the package instructions. Drain the noodles, transfer to the bowl with the dressing, and toss to coat. Divide between two serving bowls and drizzle with any remaining dressing. Top each bowl with the sliced steak, handfuls of English cucumber slices, edamame, chopped scallions, chopped peanuts, and a splash of chile crisp or Sriracha.

ILLUSTRATION: GREG CLARKE

SWIFT & SONS
STEAKHOUSE

8.

Swift & Sons

1000 W. FULTON MARKET, WEST LOOP

▶ When you close your eyes and imagine a steakhouse, this Boka Restaurant Group spot is likely what you envision: round leather booths, sleek-suited servers, big steaks splayed on cutting boards, and roaming trolleys serving cocktails and dessert. Yet with Chris Pandel in the kitchen, this spot pushes the steakhouse boundaries even further. Yes, he makes a great wedge (the lemon vinaigrette pops), and the New York strip is perfectly crusted. Get those. But save space for plates like crispy potato and ricotta pierogi with peperonata crema, sausage-stuffed chicken schnitzel, and salmon tartare with green apple. Ten years in, this place still hits. –A.C. 📷 G.S.

The Potato Power Rankings

HOW DO THE TOP SPUDS IN TOWN STACK UP?

1 **POTATOES LYONNAISE** at **JOE'S** Crisp on the outside, silky on the inside, topped with a pile of sweet caramelized onions.

2 **BEEF DRIPPING CHIPS** at **HAWKSMOOR** That's "chips" in the British sense, and these fat, craggy, golden, tallow-fried spears sport an awesome crunch.

3 **POMMES PURÉE FRITES** at **THE ALSTON** This app of foot-tall spears of fried potato is ideal when you want to start the meal with spuds.

4 **POTATO AND RICOTTA PIEROGI** at **SWIFT & SONS** Pierogi aren't a steakhouse classic, but these perfect pillowy pockets make an argument for them becoming one.

5 **BONE MARROW POTATO PURÉE** at **ASADOR BASTIAN** This überbuttery number is rich on rich.

6 **MILLIONAIRE'S POTATO** at **RPM STEAK** The black truffle shavings on this $22 side will have you feeling like a high roller.

7 **BEEF FAT FRIES** at **EL CHE** You can dunk them in the accompanying chimichurri aïoli, but they're better for sopping up spicy lobster butter.

8 **DOUBLE BAKED POTATO** at **GIBSONS** This throwback fave—sour cream and onion mash heaped back into a crackly skin and gilded with Crayola-orange cheddar—is easy to love but daunting to finish.

PHOTOGRAPH: (POTATOES) GARRETT SWEET

9.

RPM Steak

66 W. KINZIE ST., RIVER NORTH

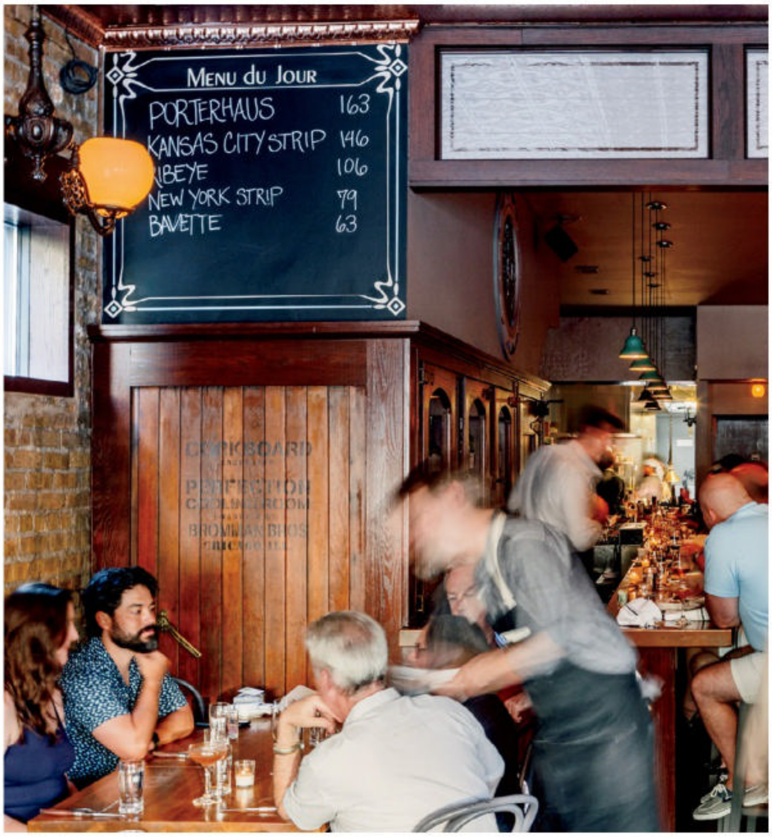
▶ From the chilled forks that accompany the cheddar-frico-topped Caesar salad to the white-jacketed servers filleting Dover sole tableside, a meal here exudes luxury. And yes, go have a blowout dinner with a buttery Westholme wagyu strip, the ember-roasted seafood tower (pictured), and sautéed spinach under a cloud of Parmesan. But this plush Lettuce Entertain You spot can work well on any budget: We're just as happy heading to the bar for a pour from wine director Richard Hanauer's list and the wagyu double cheeseburger. And if you want to do it *really* affordably, head to the weekday happy hour, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., for $10 martinis and deals on food. –A.C. 📷 G.S.

10.

Boeufhaus

1012 N. WESTERN AVE., HUMBOLDT PARK

▶ Is Boeufhaus a proper steakhouse or a chef-driven neighborhood bistro that specializes in dry-aged beef? Does it matter? Let Brian Ahern offer whatever farm's beef he deems worthy, dry-age it far longer than other chefs to unlock its flavors and suppleness, and serve it with a classic sauce of your choice. (Pick the béarnaise.) If you're not feeling steak, he also makes a fine cavatelli with merguez and fried ceci beans, and the bowl of fried perch nuggets alone is worth a visit. –J.K. 📷 J.M.



11.

Bonyeon

651 W. WASHINGTON BLVD., WEST LOOP

▶ We go to steakhouses for many reasons, but when it is really and truly simply about the beef, book the omakase at Bonyeon. For $255, Sangtae Park offers a menu with 14 courses—10 of which are beef and fully explore the flavors and textures of various cuts. This parade of bovinity includes yukhoe (beef tartare with smoked egg yolk served with a tiny cow cracker), tenderloin with rich bone marrow miso (pictured), and marinated galbi with pineapple kimchi (a play on Korean barbecue). You may want to have a salad for lunch that day. –A.C. 📷 G.S.

12.

The Alston

750 N. STATE ST., RIVER NORTH

▶ It's big, brash, and eager to separate you from as much of your money as it can – even while not delivering the consistency and wrinkle-free service the prices demand. Yet we're sneaking the Alston onto this list because when Jenner Tomaska's cooking hits its marks, it's as good as or better than any. His dry-aged New York strip is a paragon of how it's done, the crust redolent with wood smoke, the flesh rested into velour. His duck à la presse served tableside (that's Tomaska pictured at right serving it) is the dish of the season. And the room, with its ceiling of digitally morphing imagery, earns all the wows. –J.K. 📷 G.S.

Which Steakhouse Is Right for You?

FOLLOW OUR FLOW CHART TO IDENTIFY YOUR PERFECT CARNIVOROUS MATCH. BY PETER GIANOPULOS

START HERE

The first thought that comes to mind when planning your steakhouse outing is ...

A.

I'm an adventurous steak seeker who's in the mood for something unique — or at least fodder for an Instagram post.

B.

If I wanted modernity and pomposity, I'd fly to Vegas. Give me an old-school Chicago joint like one where Capone would have eaten.

C.

Terrible traffic and good steak don't mix. Give me a neighborhood spot.

Take me to the river. I want to eat overlooking the water.

SMITH & WOLLENSKY
Sure, it's a chain, but where else are you going to enjoy steaks and stellar wines at a table literally cantilevered over the Chicago River?

GIBSONS ITALIA
Same Gibsons steaks you'll find on Rush Street, only these come with a jaw-dropping view of the action on Wolf Point.

CHICAGO CUT STEAKHOUSE
Prime specimens, butchered onsite and dry-aged at least 30 days, can be enjoyed on a sleek patio bordering the river.

I prefer city views in a dining room that radiates character and class.

TORTOISE SUPPER CLUB
Forty-day wet-aged steaks served in a twinkling room of dark wood panels and red Naugahyde booths, complete with frequent jazz sessions.

ERIE CAFE
The problem with hipsters these days is they don't understand the glory of broiled steaks and seafood. Luckily, Erie still does.

CHICAGO CHOP HOUSE
Classic cuts plus horseradish-dolloped prime rib served in a 120-year-old Victorian brownstone.

GENE & GEORGETTI
Now helmed by a new generation of the family—Michelle Durpetti and her husband, Collin Pierson. See page 56.

BOEUFHAUS
A 10-year-old standby in Humboldt Park. See page 60.

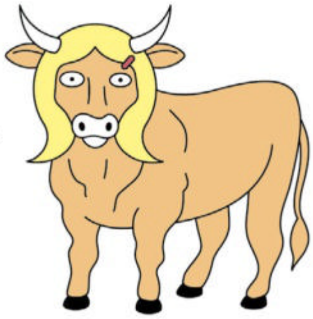
SOPHIA STEAK
Enjoy Glenn Keefer and Ryan O'Donnell's porcini-salt-sprinkled cuts in Wilmette, Lake Forest, and the Gold Coast.

NORTH CENTER PRIME
Prime steaks and seafood, including oysters Rockefeller, in the leafy heart of the neighborhood.

CHICAGO FIREHOUSE
Even after 25 years, the appeal of dining in a renovated firehouse and outdoor patio on South Michigan is as strong as ever.

Illustrations by GREG CLARKE

I want my steakhouse visits to feel like my summer vacations: internationally inspired and expensive.



ASADOR BASTIAN
This Basque-inspired spot serves txuleton steaks sourced from special blonde cattle in Spain. See page 53.

EL CHE STEAKHOUSE & BAR
Its beef is prepared the Argentine way, seared over open flames on a traditional asado-style grill. See page 55.

BONYEON
A carnivorous omakase featuring various cuts of Korean-inflected steak. See page 61.

BAZAAR MEAT
Spanish-born star chef José Andrés serves vaca vieja steaks with Old World flair.

HAWKSMOOR
This London import prepares its meat the U.K. way (charcoal grilled) and offers a very British Sunday roast: dry-aged beef rump with Yorkshire pudding and bone marrow gravy.

FIORETTA
Florentine style, served Midwesternly. Think: Linz Heritage Angus grilled over white oak, finished with Wisconsin butter.

PERILLA STEAKHOUSE
At this Korea-Chicago hybrid, the beef is fired on grills built into each table, then served with an inventive array of banchan-inspired fixings.

I'm more of a Springsteen kind of steak eater: Give me beef and a vibe that screams "Born in the U.S.A."

Winter is coming. I'm in the mood for a fall alfresco feast.

I'm a surf-and-turf spendthrift. I want a chic space with high-end steaks and ultraexpensive seafood options.

STEAK 48
Come nightfall, the second-floor outdoor patio of this swanky chain is magical, thanks to a partially enclosed roof and the dancing flames of fire pits.

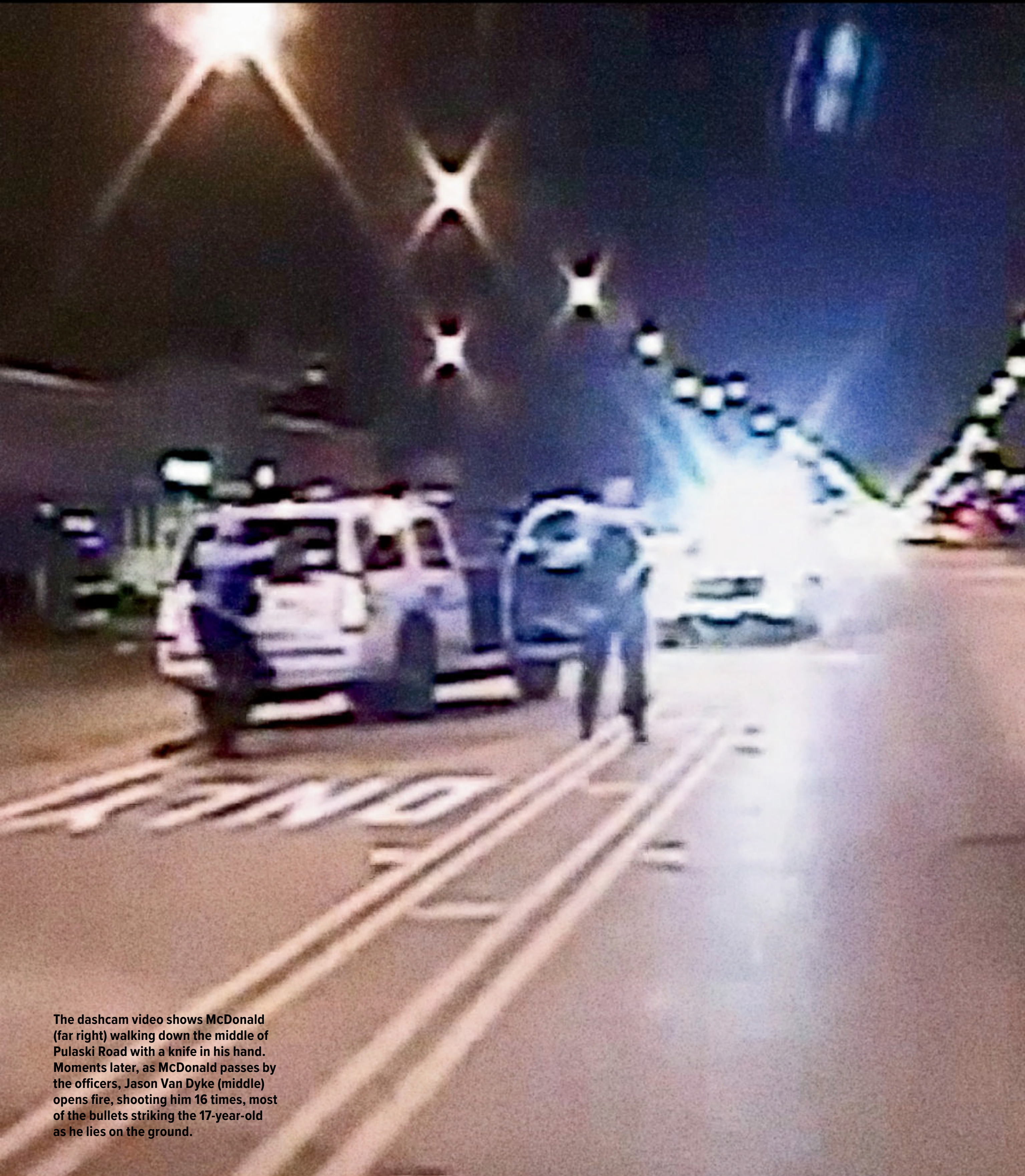
BLVD
Joe Flamm, a *Top Chef* winner, serves his Illinois-sourced steaks on a 100-seat all-season outdoor patio that gives off Cali vibes in the heart of Fulton Market.

THE ALSTON
Think $300 Australian bone-in wagyu rib eye and caviar service that can reach $3,600 a pop. See page 61.

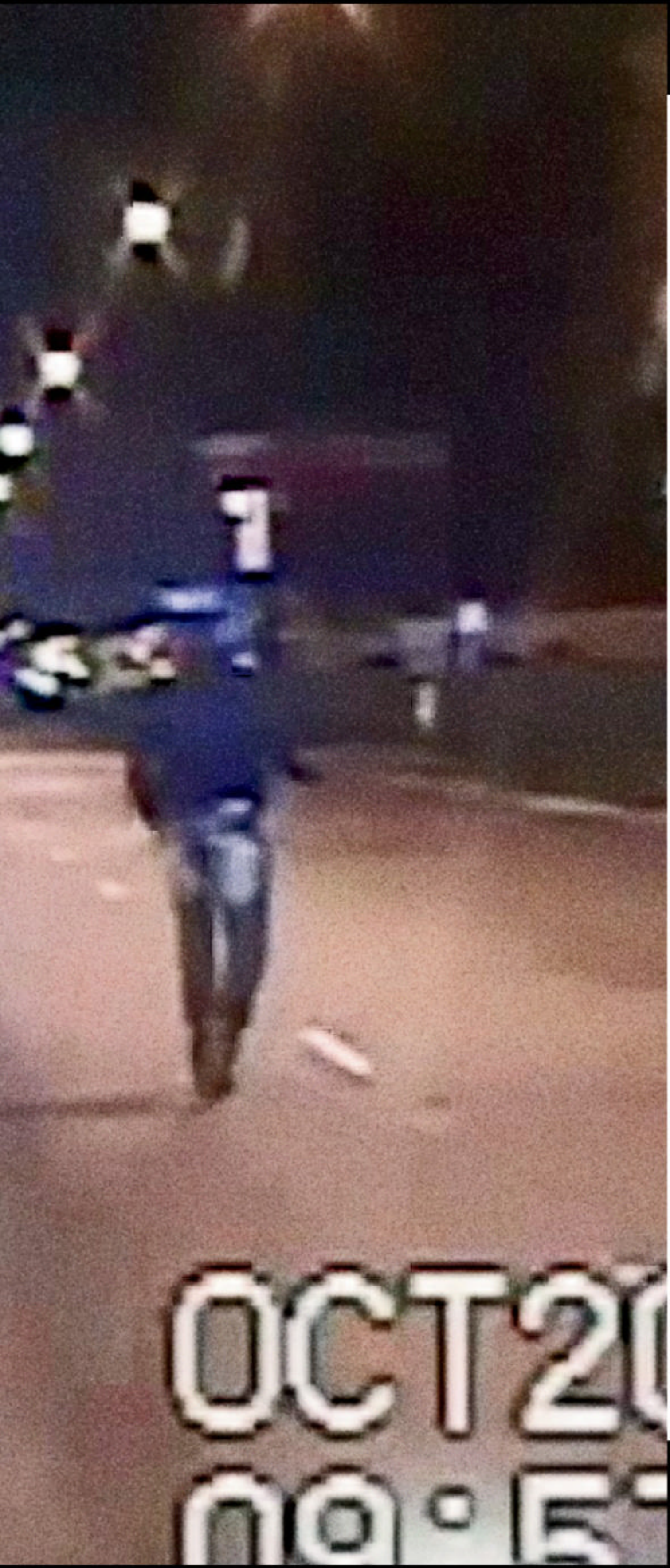
MAPLE & ASH
Pair the $300 fire-roasted seafood tower, finished with garlic butter and chile oil, with a $250 40-ounce Eisenhower steak. See page 56.

RPM STEAK
The seafood tower with wasabi Dijonnaise comes in two sizes, but the $275 option, followed by the $270 Queensland wagyu tomahawk, is for the real ballers. See page 60.

MICHAEL JORDAN'S STEAK HOUSE
Go full MJ by ordering the tuna tartare and lobster tail seafood tower followed by the legendary $275 steak sampler.



The dashcam video shows McDonald (far right) walking down the middle of Pulaski Road with a knife in his hand. Moments later, as McDonald passes by the officers, Jason Van Dyke (middle) opens fire, shooting him 16 times, most of the bullets striking the 17-year-old as he lies on the ground.



The Video That Shook Chicago

Ten years ago this month, dashcam footage was released showing Laquan McDonald being shot to death by a police officer. Nothing would ever be the same again.

BY MIKE THOMAS

The video dropped like a bombshell.

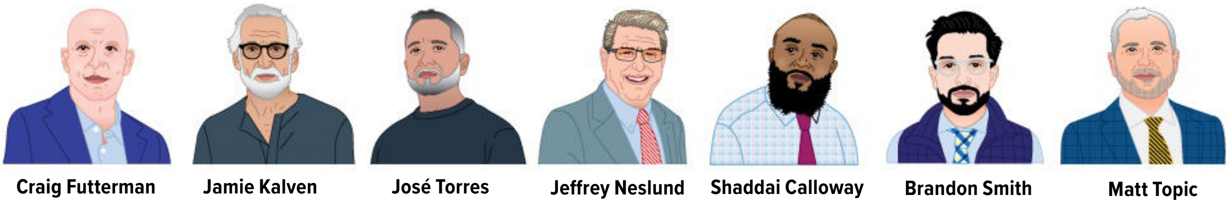
Late in the afternoon of November 24, 2015, two days before Thanksgiving, media outlets in Chicago and far beyond posted and broadcast the graphic footage, which shocked and enraged viewers, hundreds of whom soon clogged the South Loop intersection of Roosevelt and Michigan during raucous protests that lasted into the early-morning hours.

Captured by a Chicago Police Department dashcam and released by the city under court order, the roughly six-minute video is blurry, with muddy colors and blooming lights. It is also silent but for the faint, high-pitched sound of sirens. As displayed in flashing white type, the date is October 20, 2014, shortly before 10 p.m. The POV is that of a police cruiser, which rolls up behind a male pedestrian in the 4100 block of South Pulaski Road in the Southwest Side neighborhood of Archer Heights. He is 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, and he is holding a three-inch knife. The police are responding to calls he had been breaking into trucks and acting erratically. He will later be found to have a low dose of PCP in his system.

Wearing jeans and a dark hoodie, he runs down the middle of the street before slowing to a bouncy walk and drifting right. Eleven more seconds pass, then he stops suddenly. His feet together, he spins all the way around and crumples to the asphalt. Shot. One of the officers who'd pulled up in a squad car and approached McDonald had fired at him as McDonald passed by. That is 13-year Chicago Police Department veteran Jason Van Dyke, though his identity – and his history of excessive-force complaints – will not be revealed publicly for six more months. Van Dyke keeps firing – a rapid succession of 16 bullets in all – striking McDonald's jerking body in the back, chest, arms, hand, elbow, neck, scalp, and leg. Within an hour, he will be pronounced dead.

Laquan McDonald's death may well have become just another statistic if not for a yearlong battle by journalists, activists, and lawyers to unveil this video evidence of the brutal shooting. The consequences of their often intertwined efforts were wide-ranging. For the first time in nearly 35 years, a Chicago police officer was charged with first-degree murder for an on-duty killing. A U.S. Justice Department investigation uncovered a pattern of excessive force

THE NARRATORS



VIDEO STILL: (PREVIOUS SPREAD) CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Illustrations by QUICKHONEY

Journalist Jamie Kalven (left), prompted by civil rights attorney Craig Futterman (right), wrote the first story that detailed what happened that night, countering the police version and revealing the existence of the dashcam video. Says Kalven: "I often think about Laquan McDonald in parallel to Emmett Till."

Photograph by AKILAH TOWNSEND

“I got a call from someone in law enforcement.
KNEW THAT THE INCIDENT
They told me it was an execution and that the police shot

by Chicago police, leading to widespread reform measures. A police superintendent was fired. A state’s attorney lost her reelection bid. A mayor declined to run for office again.

A decade after their historic victory, the key players recount how they helped bring the transformative video to light.

CRAIG FUTTERMAN, University of Chicago Law School professor and founder of its Civil Rights and Police Accountability Clinic: My first intersection with anything related to Laquan McDonald was reading a couple of paragraphs about the shooting in the local papers. This was a story you’d see on a weekly basis because, at that time, Chicago police were shooting, on average, [close to] one Black person a week. The story was like, “Police see a young Black man armed with a knife, he comes at them, an officer shoots him in self-defense. End of story. Nothing to see.” And then three words that shut down all further inquiry: “It’s under investigation.” That meant you wouldn’t have access to anything about it. I could put air quotes around these “investigations,” because they were very much a part of the machinery designed to ensure police officers wouldn’t be held accountable.

Then I got a call from someone in law enforcement in Chicago. They felt they could trust me because of my long history at the U. of C. clinic. They’d seen the video and knew that the incident was being covered up. They told me it was an execution and that the police shot that boy like he was nothing but a dog in the street. They walked me through it frame by frame. It was the complete antithesis of what the police department had told the news media. Laquan was not threatening anyone and was moving away from the police when they first shot. Then, while the boy was on the ground, they shot him repeatedly while he writhed in pain. The source was tired of this mess and asked if I could help stop it. So I reached out to Jamie Kalven, who I’d been working with closely for 14 years at this point, and began to put in place plans to investigate this with my law students as well.

JAMIE KALVEN, founding executive director of the Invisible Institute, a local investigative journalism nonprofit: The concern at that point was also the concern of the person who provided the tip – that the video would be deep-sixed. There was also a civilian eyewitness who had come forward to report what he had seen. That was José Torres. I didn’t have an exact address, so I spent time trying to track him down. I finally located him and came to his door several times before his wife answered and said she’d convey a message to him. But there was no contact, so I came back. It was kind of a great scene. It was raining lightly. I knocked on his door, and he answered. He was standing in the doorway and really upset to see me because he’d been given reassurances of confidentiality by the people he talked to. But even as he was alarmed by my presence, he couldn’t *not* tell me the broad strokes of what he had seen. Before parting with him, I left him my card and urged him to get in touch if he had more. Then I went to my car and immediately called Craig and said, “There’s a story here.”

JOSÉ TORRES, witness to the shooting: Back in 2014, my son Xavier was 22 and really ill with Lyme disease, but we didn’t know what it was at the time. He was constantly going in and out of the hospital. We’re on the South Side, in West Elsdon, by Midway, and I have a sister-in-law who worked for a hospital up north, Lutheran General. We were on our way there, traveling north on Pulaski. It was just before 10 p.m.

When I got to 41st, I saw a police car coming in my direction, and I pulled over. Then police started surrounding the area. There were several police cars at that point. And I remember seeing Laquan McDonald walking in the middle of the street. The whole time, I was on the phone with my wife, just making sure my sister-in-law was aware we were on our way. I was describing everything I saw: “There’s something going on here. There’s police. There’s a guy in the middle of the street.” Shortly after that, I heard the gunshots and Laquan fell. We were on an angle in the third lane over and had a clear view. I got upset. I said, “Why the fuck are they just shooting him? He’s on the ground.” Xavier was freaking out. I remember him telling me “Let’s go!” as soon as the shooting happened. He goes, “We just witnessed this. We’ve got to turn around and get out of here.” He felt that the police were going to shoot us. But it took a while for us to do that because police officers were still arriving. You could actually see the blood running away from the body. We felt sick.

The following morning, I woke up and turned on the news like I always do. What got me upset was when [Chicago Fraternal Order of Police spokesman] Pat Camden came on and made some remark about, “What are you supposed to do with a knife-wielding person, have coffee with them?” I’m like, that’s BS, that’s not what happened. I called a buddy of mine, who was a Chicago police officer, and was going back and forth with him about what to do. He said, “Do what you think is right.” I was telling my wife, “I need to speak up.” She was worried: “You don’t know what’s going to happen. We’re going to have retaliation by the police.” But I couldn’t sleep. It kept eating away at me: What if that was my son?

THEY’D SEEN THE VIDEO AND WAS BEING COVERED UP.

that boy like he was nothing but a dog in the street.”

It took me less than two weeks to contact IPRA [Independent Police Review Authority, a city agency tasked with investigating allegations of police misconduct]. I spoke to a detective there, and we made an appointment for me to come in. I was worried: “Am I going to be safe?” They promised me that everything is kept under wraps and my information wouldn’t come out. During the interview, they kept asking me if I thought Laquan McDonald was getting up. I said I didn’t see that. I said it looked like his body was bouncing from the gunshots. But they kept on pushing it: “Did you think he was getting up?” At the end, I finally said, “I don’t know. Maybe. But from what I saw, he was just moving because he was in pain.”

Shortly after, Jamie Kalven came by, and my wife called me. I was really pissed off. They said my name was going to be kept out of it, and here I had a reporter at my door. And if a reporter is able to find out my information, I know for a fact that the police know who I am. When Jamie came back, he told me he got a tip that the police were trying to sweep this under the rug. I was paranoid. I was looking behind him, looking around to make sure I wasn’t being set up for something. Like, I watch movies.

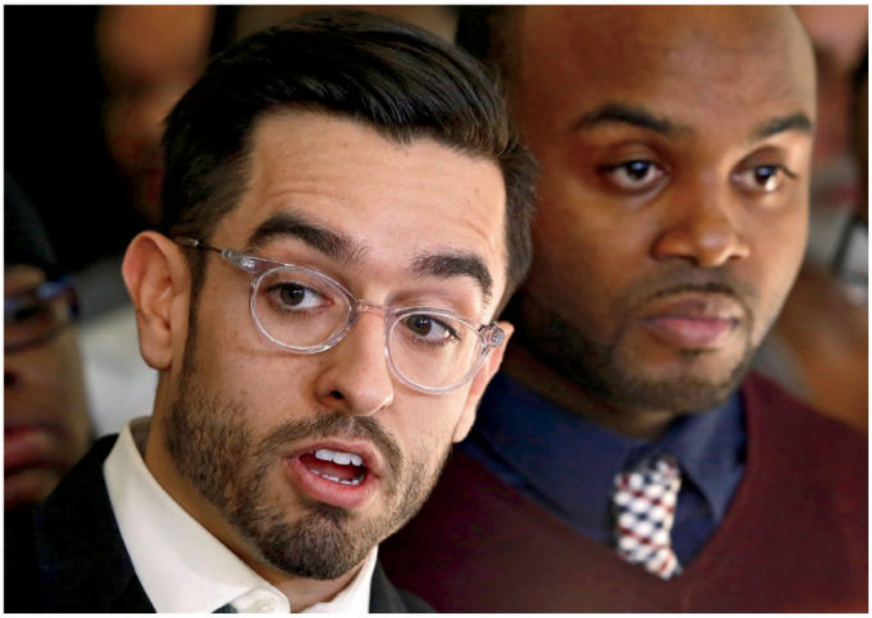
After Jamie left his information, I looked him up and saw exactly what he did. I contacted him and we met up. When he got involved, that’s when everything started unwinding. Jamie was really passionate about getting to the truth. And I’m like, OK, this is a good thing, he’s not going to let this go.

KALVEN: Now I had two points in what proved to be a three-point stool. I had reason to believe that the video was pretty definitive of what happened. I had an eyewitness who was credible. So my next move was to try to get the autopsy. But there’s a period when an autopsy is not subject to FOIA [the Freedom of Information Act], until the medical examiner has concluded their final report. So I went to [Cook County Board President] Toni Preckwinkle, who I have a good relationship with, and asked if she could get top-level information. The Pat Camden account was that the young man lunged at the officer, and the officer shot him in self-defense. And it wasn’t said explicitly, but the impression was that one or two shots hit him in the chest and he died.

Toni’s chief of staff was [future Cook County State’s Attorney] Kim Foxx. So Kim went to the medical examiner’s office and got the basic information about the autopsy. By that time, it was around the holidays in December. One evening after dark, it was snowing and I went out for a run in Washington Park. And as I was running down 51st Street, Toni pulled up in her car and beckoned me. No niceties. No “Hello, how are you? Merry Christmas.” Toni cuts to the chase. And the first thing she said to me was “16 shots.” She is the first person who uttered that phrase.

FUTTERMAN: Jamie and I posted a public statement on the web calling on the mayor to release the video and share the truth about what happened. We raised fundamental questions and called on him to do the right thing. But the city and the police department doubled down on “Nothing to see here.” There was also “What can we do to dirty up this kid?” Whatever they could do

Journalist Brandon Smith (left), urged by activist Shaddai Calloway (right), brought the lawsuit that forced the city to publicly release the footage. Says Jamie Kalven: “It was [their] serendipitous naïveté that set the whole FOIA litigation in motion.”



PHOTOGRAPH: CHARLES REX ARBOGAST/AP

“We were on an angle in the third lane over and had a clear view. I got upset. I said, ‘**WHY ARE THEY JUST SHOOTING HIM?** He’s on the ground.’ ”

to bolster the narrative of a single shot in self-defense. But when we got the autopsy, it mapped each and every one of the 16 shots – a completely different reality.

KALVEN: I knew I had enough to construct the narrative, so I started to write. I needed a national publication for it, so I sent a draft to Jacob Weisberg at *Slate*, where I’d written previously, and to Bill Keller at *The New York Times*, who was starting the Marshall Project [to report on abuses within the criminal justice system]. Jacob got back to me faster, so I ended up doing it for *Slate*, though Keller had a couple of suggestions that I incorporated in the piece.

It was exciting to break a story on that scale. But we were waiting to see how the Emanuel administration would respond. They had an opportunity to say, “In light of public interest, the gravity of this incident, here’s what we know about the case. Here’s the video.” The astonishing thing is, they just kept doubling down on this false narrative. Various media outlets made FOIA requests for the video and were denied, so I felt no need to make an additional request. I accepted, as most seasoned journalists did, that the city’s rationale – that the video figured into an ongoing investigation – would prevail in court.

In February 2015, a couple of weeks after Kalven’s Slate *story started making waves, incumbent Mayor Rahm Emanuel was forced into a runoff with challenger Jesús “Chuy” García in his reelection bid. A few days after that, attorneys for McDonald’s family, Jeffrey Neslund and Michael Robbins, received two police dashcam videos that they had subpoenaed. Those videos showed McDonald walking away from police when he was initially shot.*

JEFFREY NESLUND, attorney for McDonald’s family: The case came in through a defense lawyer we shared office space with. He knew the family and made the introduction. They had pictures from the funeral home, because the funeral home director was concerned about the number of gunshot wounds. But they were kind of blurry; you couldn’t tell what was what. So we opened a probate estate. In a wrongful death, a probate estate gives you subpoena power. We knew where the shooting happened, so we issued subpoenas to all the businesses in the area for any video footage: Dunkin’ Donuts, Burger King, the Greater Chicago Food Depository. We got a call back from the food depository, and the guy said, “Yeah, we’ve got video footage. The FBI was just here. You guys can come look at it whenever you want.” And the Burger King folks were really upset because IPRA took their entire server with all their video.

Craig Futterman was chasing the case, and he had an investigator talking to [McDonald’s sister] Tariana. Laquan’s mom, Tina Hunter, was upset: “Who’s this strange man in the apartment with my 15-year-old daughter?” We knew Craig from civil rights work. So we called him and said, “First of all, back off. We got the case. Second of all, what do you know?” He said he’d heard from a source that there was disturbing dashcam video, so we sent out a wave of subpoenas for all the police reports and 911 calls. Eventually, we got reports back showing that not just one but two dashcams had been preserved. So we sent another round of subpoenas asking for the dashcams. And somebody over at CPD made a copy, put it in the mail, and sent it to us.

Instantly, we knew this wasn’t your normal police shooting. This was a murder. We called the supervisor of the city’s federal torts division and said, “We represent the McDonald family. We have a copy of the dashcam video. Does the city want to sit down and talk about it, or should we just go ahead and file suit?” Because we thought it was pretty much a slam dunk. The city said, “Sure, we’ll talk to you about it.”

We told them we had to see the police reports and the detectives’ GPRs – their handwritten general progress report notes. So they set up a reading room and said, “We’ll let you come in and read everything. You can make all the notes you want, but you can’t copy anything.” We saw that there were three witnesses they had brought to the police station. And for one, a truck driver, there were like three scribbled lines: “I heard a bunch of shots, saw nothing.” When we got back to the office, we called him, and he said, “It was an execution.” He was in the upper cab of his truck, heard the sirens, and saw the whole thing. They kept trying to get him to change his story. When he wouldn’t, they finally cut him loose in the middle of the night. After that, we wrote a second demand letter to the city saying it wasn’t just a bad shooting – it was an attempt to cover it up.

Then we met with the medical examiner, who walked us through the gunshots. And it was an education. There was an entry wound to the top of Laquan’s right hand but no exit wound, which meant his hand was up against something. We knew it was the ground. He had shrapnel in his teeth from ricochets off the ground. Tina did not want to see the video, so we watched it and described it to her.

On April 7, Emanuel defeated García in the runoff. Though he has denied it, he would later be widely accused of keeping

José Torres, who witnessed the shooting, came forward with what he saw. "I got so much hate and caught so much heat," he says. "But I have friends who are police officers, and a lot of them said I did the right thing."

the dashcam video under wraps so as not to hurt his chances in the election. Eight days after Emanuel won his second term, the city settled with McDonald's family for $5 million.

NESLUND: The settlement had to be approved by the City Council, and all the news media was there. So when this story hit, it was going to be front-page news. Then you had this public pressure: "We've got to see the video." Some clients would have released that video and had a big press conference and just made a huge production of it. And other clients go the opposite way. Tina did not want the execution of her son playing over and over on YouTube and in the news cycle. So we did not release the tape because our client didn't want it released and because we were told by the feds that it was an

Photograph by AKILAH TOWNSEND

ongoing investigation. It was almost a professional courtesy. The only agreement with the city was that we'd give them advance notice of a release, because they didn't want riots. But at the same time, I'm not the only guy with a copy.

On April 25, the Chicago Tribune *revealed that Jason Van Dyke was the police officer who had shot McDonald. Earlier that month, federal officials had confirmed that the FBI was investigating the shooting, in conjunction with the offices of the U.S. attorney and the Cook County state's attorney.*

NESLUND: As spring turned into summer, we would call the FBI agent [in charge of the investigation] and say, "What's going on? When is this indictment coming?" Each cop involved had lawyered up, and the FBI had their use-of-force experts coming in, da-da-da-da. And so the grand jury on this case continued to drag it out. Tina would call us and say, "When's this guy getting arrested for murder?"

SHADDAI (FORMERLY WILLIAM) CALLOWAY, community activist: We'd experienced Trayvon Martin being killed by George Zimmerman in Florida. You had Michael Brown in Ferguson. You had [police killings] in Baltimore and New York. So the groundswell had started all across the country, but it had a special presence here in Chicago.

In April 2015, [Chicago police Detective] Dante Servin went to trial for the shooting death of Rekia Boyd. He was acquitted on a technicality. So Rekia didn't receive justice. If something like that happened now, there would be press everywhere. But at that time, it was just Rekia's brother, her mother, and some supporters in the courtroom. That year, the Chicago Police Department shot between 40 and 50 people, and nobody was held accountable. So for me it was a gumbo of rapid injustice. I felt defeated. I'm like, We're losing on all fronts. We're losing judicially and we're losing politically. What can we do? I remember going into my apartment after the Servin trial, and I didn't come outside for a week. It really put me in a dark space.

I talked with a civil rights attorney named Billy Joe Mills, and I told him, "Man, police have this video of a boy getting shot 16 times. We got to get it out. How do we do that?" He said, "We probably just have to FOIA it. But they might not release something like that, so you have to sue them." He knew an independent journalist who did a lot of FOIA stuff. A couple of days later, he put me in touch with Brandon Smith.

BRANDON SMITH, independent journalist: Will was doing the really hard work of reaching out to and talking with the relatives of people who had been murdered by police, and I deeply respected him for that. He was the one who said, "I think this is going to be a big deal." He pointed me to Jamie Kalven's piece in *Slate* and [a segment by] NBC-5's Carol Marin. That's how we knew there was a video. Will was looking for someone to FOIA it. He found the right person.

At the time, I was working as a cook and dishwasher at a restaurant in Logan Square and doing journalism on the side, mornings and weekends. By that point, I had filed suit for three FOIA requests, and I kind of knew we would have to sue for this one, too. So did the lawyer I worked with, Matt Topic. I'd been his client for almost two years. If you win a FOIA case in Illinois, the attorney gets paid by the losing side. So the lawyer comes at no cost to you. As a cook-dishwasher, I wasn't funding a high-dollar attorney for this. I just brought Matt a good case, and he was confident he could win it.

MATT TOPIC, FOIA attorney: I had been eyeballs-deep in another case about surveillance technology, and that was where my head was at that time. So Brandon had to nudge me a bit. The point he made was that this potentially was going to be extremely explosive, and it was really important for the video to be released. Then I dug into it, and I completely agreed.

If it wasn't for Jamie in *Slate*, I don't know that the case would have gotten any further attention. That really set the table for someone to come in and say, "I'm not just going to ask them to release the video, I'm going to try to get a court to *make* them release the video." Brandon didn't understand why others weren't pushing it, so he wanted us to push it.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, joined by Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, meets with the media when the video is released on November 24, 2015. A week later, Emanuel would hold another press conference, announcing McCarthy's firing and citing the need for "fresh eyes and new leadership."

PHOTOGRAPH: NUCCIO DINUZZO/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

> “Toni [Preckwinkle] pulled up in her car and beckoned me. **THE FIRST THING SHE SAID WAS ‘16 SHOTS.’** She is the first person who uttered that phrase.”

KALVEN: It was Will Calloway and Brandon Smith’s serendipitous naïveté that set the whole FOIA litigation in motion. And as Brandon’s lawsuit was going forward, there was a building movement of people protesting in the street.

SMITH: The city kept us on the line for weeks, if not months, while we went through the motions of trying to work with them. Even though we figured we’d have to sue, you have to show that you tried to work with them.

TOPIC: The city delayed him a few times, and it eventually got to the point where he said we weren’t going to accept any more delays. We had been preparing a complaint on the assumption that they were eventually going to deny the request. And we were getting ready for a point in the near future where if they weren’t going to produce it, we were going to take the case to court. Craig Futterman was a cocounsel. He and I had been looking for some things to collaborate on, and I thought there could be opportunities here to work together and give his students a chance to get involved in something important.

A lot of reporters, and a lot of lawyers representing reporters, were accustomed to the police department’s standard practice that if it’s an open investigation, they’re not going to release anything. And that’s not really what the law says. The law says not only does there have to be an open investigation, but they have to prove that releasing the requested information would interfere with the investigation. Proof generally means declarations or affidavits signed by knowledgeable personnel at the Chicago Police Department under penalty of perjury. But I think what happens more often is they dance around the issues, which is what they tried to do in the Laquan case. Delay is a huge tactic. The city did not want to release the video unless the feds were going to charge Jason Van Dyke. And there was no indication that that was ever going to happen, or that [State’s Attorney] Anita Alvarez was going to charge anybody.

SMITH: The city’s whole argument was that releasing the video would impede an ongoing investigation. All we had to ask was for them to prove that they were still investigating and to show us how they thought it would harm the investigation. They didn’t respond to either of those things. We later learned that they hadn’t done any work on the investigation for months.

TOPIC: The city never claimed there was a Chicago Police Department investigation, because there wasn’t. There was an IPRA investigation, a state’s attorney’s office investigation, and a federal investigation. And so they were relying on those things, but that’s not what the text of the statute says.

One of their arguments in the case, and one of the things that greatly offended me about their position, was that they said they still had to interview some witnesses, and if those witnesses saw the video before they’d interviewed them, they wouldn’t know the extent to which their statements were influenced by the video. At the same time, when you tell the public that Laquan was lunging with a knife, what are you doing to the witnesses who saw it differently? You’re telling them they’re sideways with the Chicago Police Department.

I knew that under the law, we were right. I also knew that the legal system is imperfect. This had been the CPD’s custom for a very long time, and a lot of judges were going to give that some deference. It was also a politically sensitive case, and that adds a whole other dynamic. I was confident the city would argue that releasing the video would create another Ferguson in Chicago and that any judge would want to think about that.

On November 19, Smith, Topic, and Futterman appeared before Cook County Judge Franklin Valderrama (now a federal judge) for a decision on the lawsuit.

CALLOWAY: Brandon and I met downstairs at the Daley Center, then walked up together. I said I was so proud of him that he cared enough to listen. I said, “Man, we’re going to be brothers forever, no matter how this goes.” In the courtroom, I was sitting right behind Brandon, who was at the plaintiff’s table. I had brought some community members with me. When Judge Valderrama came in and took the bench [and the bailiff said], “All rise,” my heart started thumping. Because I was reliving what happened with Rekia seven months before. I feel like the judge looked at me. I looked at him. And he read his decision: The video had to be released in five days. I was in total disbelief. Stone-cold shock. I remember Brandon turning around with this very stern look and nodding his head like, “Yeah, it’s poppin’.” All the national and local media were outside the courtroom, so we talked to them. That was a wild day.

SMITH: The real news was when we learned that the city was not going to appeal the case. We figured they would, and that it would take many more months to get the video.

FUTTERMAN: When I came back from court that day, I was crying on the couch. The irony was, as hard as we fought for the video, I didn’t want to watch the murder of a 17-year-old kid.

“When I came back from court that day, as hard as we fought for the video, **I DIDN’T WANT TO**

On November 23, Emanuel met with community leaders to plan for the protests that would surely arise with the video’s release. The next day, Alvarez charged Van Dyke with first-degree murder. He turned himself in shortly afterward.

NESLUND: The FBI told us they weren’t ready for an indictment. So the feds punted it to Anita Alvarez at the county level and said, “You’ve got to indict this guy for murder.” And it blew up in their face.

Hours later, on the afternoon of November 24, a day before the court-ordered deadline, Emanuel held a press conference at police headquarters in Bronzeville in which he urged calm. Coinciding with that, the city released the video. It quickly circulated online around the country and the world.

CALLOWAY: Brandon was trying to get into the press conference, but they wouldn’t let him in [because he didn’t have press credentials]. I said I’d meet him down there, and by the time I made my way to the area, the city had released the video, so I watched it on my phone. Brandon and I had months to think about what was on the tape, to imagine the worst-case scenario. So to be honest, at that point, my mind wasn’t even in shock anymore. By the time I saw the video, I’d arrived at the point of “Can we prove murder?” That’s all I was looking for. I only needed to watch it once and was like, Yeah, that’s it.

SMITH: I watched it in my car. It’s real-life horror. It’s everything you dread happening to your loved ones.

TOPIC: It was as bad as people thought it was going to be. The other really big thing that jumped out at me was that after Laquan was shot, no other officer even looked to see if anything could be done. They just ignored him as he was dying on the street. And that, I wasn’t fully expecting. To me, that sort of callousness was a metaphor for what was wrong with the Chicago Police Department.

FUTTERMAN: It was more than just a revelation about one bad apple who murdered a kid. It was a system that protected police officers. As it blew up nationally and internationally, I got calls from people in conservative rural white areas saying, “Y’all got real problems in Chicago” and “Appreciate what you’re doing.” And I remember really well the day after Thanksgiving, Black Friday, a protest led by young Black people on the Magnificent Mile in front of all the boutiques. It brought me to tears. I remember watching the evening news and hearing some of the owners of those shops saying things that weren’t simply, “Get those kids off the street.” It was more like, “You’ve got to do something about the reason why the kids were outside protesting my shop.”

SMITH: A week or two after the video’s release, Will and I were having breakfast at this cafeteria-style space, Valois, in Hyde Park. We were the only people there when we arrived. We got our food, sat down, and within 10 minutes Chicago police officers filled every seat of this diner. By that point, Will and I had been on every English-speaking TV channel, talking about the police. They knew who we were. But not a single police officer talked to us or looked at us. It was either an incredible coincidence or it was a show of force.

KALVEN: After the video was released, Rahm Emanuel called me. When I got home, I wrote him an email summarizing what I had said in our conversation. I used the words “code of silence.” He called me again [the morning of December 1] and said, “I want to be sure you watch the news today.” That’s when he fired [Police Superintendent] Garry McCarthy. Soon after, Scott Ando, the head of IPRA, resigned. And Rahm gave a speech to the City Council, which I personally think was the high point for him. I felt like it was genuine. If he had lived up to that speech going forward, he would have been a national leader on these issues. He would have been elected to a third mayoral term if he had stayed the course on that. But he couldn’t sustain it.

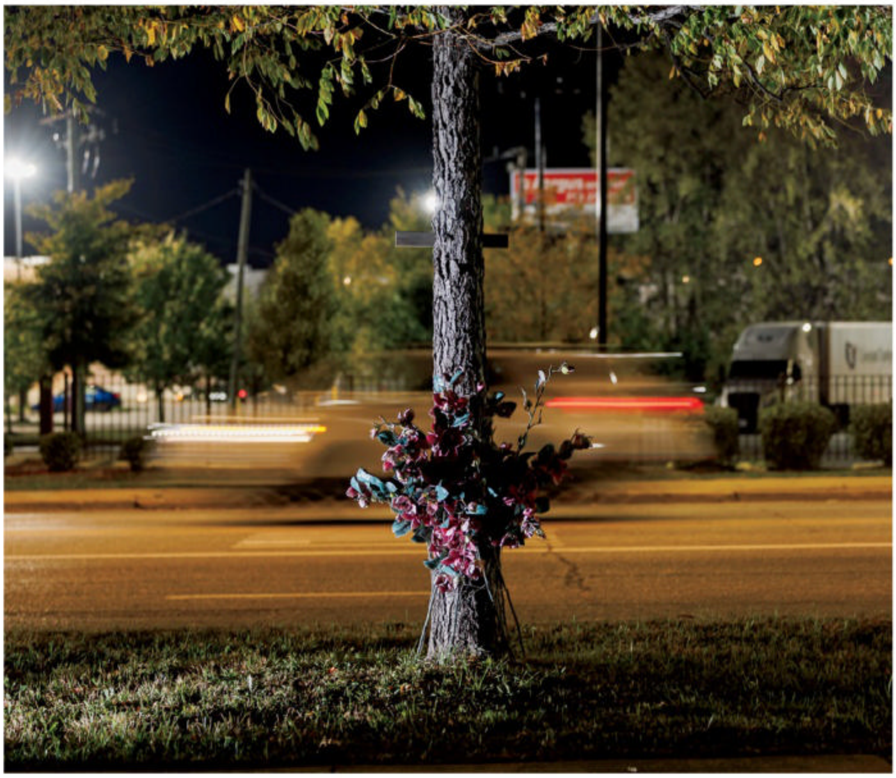
The following March, Kim Foxx defeated Alvarez in the primary for Cook County state’s attorney. Alvarez’s loss was seen as a referendum on her handling of the Van Dyke case, in particular the holdup in charging him. And while Emanuel has sought to downplay the subject in interviews, the blowback from the delay in the video’s release is believed to have played a significant role in his decision not to seek a third term.

In October 2018, Van Dyke was convicted of second-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery with a firearm. He was sentenced to 81 months in prison. Freed in February 2022, he served less than half his term.

CALLOWAY: I never in a million years thought this was going to get as much traction as it got. I just wanted to put pressure on Rahm. I wanted some type of justice for Rekia. I never thought there would be a Department of Justice investigation, Anita Alvarez being ousted, Garry McCarthy being fired, Rahm retiring, City Council changing over. So the video had

I was crying on the couch. The irony was,
WATCH THE MURDER OF A 17-YEAR-OLD KID.”

maximum effect. And if you look at statistical data of how many Chicagoans were getting shot and/or killed by Chicago police around that time and you compare it to now, it’s really night and day. And without Laquan, you have no Lori Lightfoot. Without Lori, you have no Brandon Johnson. So it accomplished everything I wanted to accomplish, except Van Dyke being released from the penitentiary after serving only three and a half years. That part was a huge miscarriage of justice.



In this photo taken last October, 10 years after the shooting, a cross and flowers hang near where Laquan McDonald was killed in Archer Heights, on the 4100 block of South Pulaski Road.

PHOTOGRAPH: ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

KALVEN: What ultimately happened, and what created the opening for police reform in Chicago, wasn’t just that a particular cover-up unraveled. It was that the entire narrative machinery of the city blew up. And at that point, nothing the police or the mayor said was to be believed. There was hubris, but this was also a standard operating procedure that had worked so many times before.

FUTTERMAN: There’s no doubt that the case was a watershed moment in Chicago history. A police officer was criminally prosecuted and convicted, though he got a relative slap on the wrist. And it was the first time they prosecuted police officers who [were alleged to have] participated in covering up a murder. [Those three officers were found not guilty.] It also led to this commission that I played a part in, the Chicago Police Accountability Task Force. It led to the disbanding of the Independent Police Review Authority and the creation of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability. It led to the first and still only Chicago Police Department consent decree [which governs reforms in use of force, training, accountability, and other areas] that people in the community most impacted by police abuse have the power to enforce in federal court. We finally began seeing credible independent investigations into police misconduct in Chicago.

TORRES: I don’t know if I would do it again, to be honest. I got so much hate and caught so much heat. I lost acquaintances and Facebook friends. But I have friends who are police officers, and a lot of them said I did the right thing.

KALVEN: I often think about Laquan McDonald in parallel to Emmett Till. The atrocity of what happened to Emmett became this defining moment in the 1950s, but there were countless atrocities, nameless victims that didn’t become public narratives. With the Laquan McDonald video, that was the equivalent of Emmett’s open casket.

TOPIC: It often takes one very particular individual story to catalyze things to change. The public just needs to keep insisting on holding the police accountable. Because if given the opportunity, things will go back to how they were. Maybe now, at least, police are afraid to lie in reports because they know that video could potentially come out. Even if that’s all we end up with at the end of the day, that’s still a pretty significant improvement.

2 A.M.

We asked six photographers to capture a slice of the city at an hour when most Chicagoans are asleep. Here's what they came back with one Thursday in September.

▸

2:28 a.m., Lower West Side

CLARISSA BONET: "I was shooting at Don's Grill on Western Avenue when I saw a bus pass by. As it started to depart the stop, I saw this gentleman come running from around the corner. I could tell he was trying to catch the bus and just missed it. He sat down in the bus shelter, paying no attention to what I was doing. After capturing some shots of the diner, I crossed the street for a second angle. Before I could even get that set up, I saw him illuminated by the light, and he became this kind of silhouette. It was very much my aesthetic, this kind of anonymous individual sitting within the urban landscape. I quickly composed a few frames before a car picked him up, perhaps a rideshare or a friend. Clearly, he had somewhere to be."

PILSEN WELLNESS CENTER
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Mental Health C
Consejería de S
TREE SERVICE
TIRE SHOP
TOW ZONE

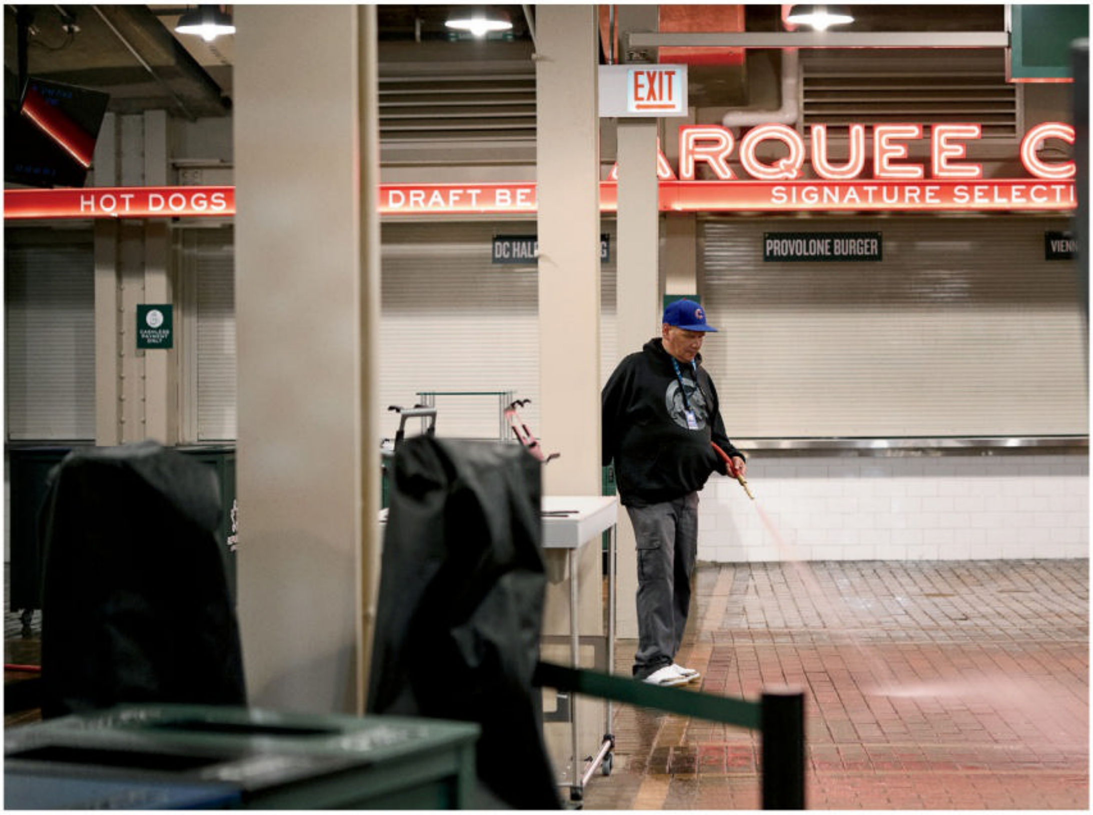
2:11 a.m., West Loop

NOLIS ANDERSON: "The average person sees a bar only when it's open. You don't get to see the after hours, when the music is off, everything's quiet, and more of the house lights are on. People are closing out, cleaning up, getting the space prepared for the next day. This image is from the bar area at Moneygun—it's through the service window that leads into the kitchen. He was wiping the thing down and just looked up, and I grabbed a shot. It really showcases what I was trying to get: that this is still a workplace, still a 9-to-5 for a lot of people, even though it's 2 in the morning."

▶

2:05 a.m., Loop

DAVE JORDANO: “As much photography as I’ve done in Chicago, I never really go into the Loop. The L is one of Chicago’s most iconic symbols, so I went to the LaSalle/Van Buren stop just about 2 o’clock. There was a security guard in her office. I said, ‘I’d like to take a picture up on the platform. Is that OK?’ And she goes, ‘Well, we close at 2 o’clock.’ I said, ‘What? Wait a minute, I need an hour to photograph.’ And she goes, ‘No, you can’t. Everything will be closed by 2:10.’ So I asked to take just a couple of pictures, and she let me in. I think it’s such a beautiful photograph. Pretty much all I’ve done in the city at night is architectural views of street corners and stuff like that. This is another street corner in a way.”



▲

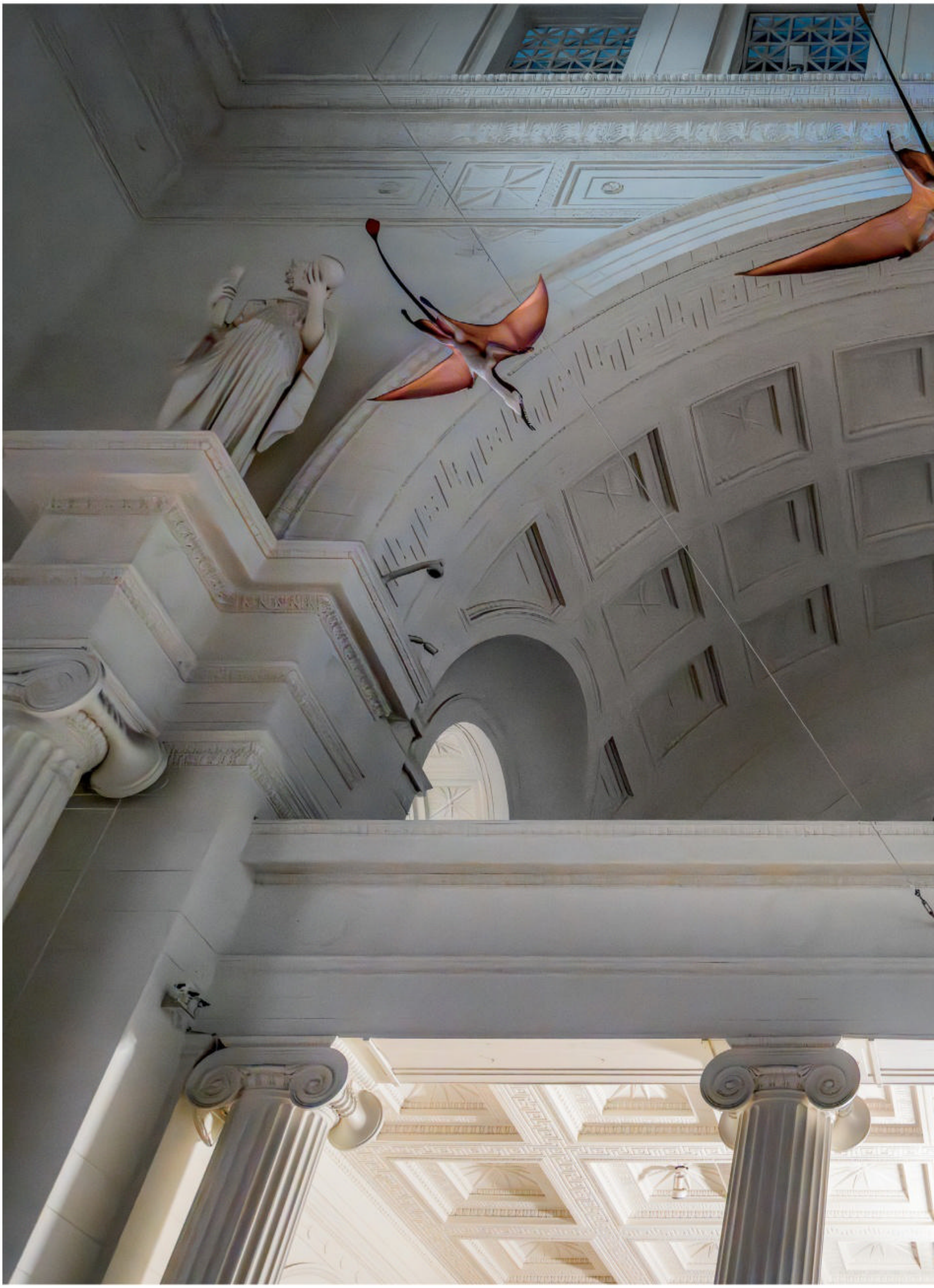
2:42 a.m., Wrigley Field

MUSTAFA HUSSAIN: “When I got to Wrigley, I biked around the stadium, looking for the night shift workers cleaning up. I came across this guy hosing down the floors, so I spent a few minutes with him, making images. I was standing against the green gate, just letting the scene play out in front of my lens. We don’t think about how the stadium gets cleaned and at what hours. But next time there’s a game, those floors are going to be clean because of this guy.”

LP1 91
LP1 91

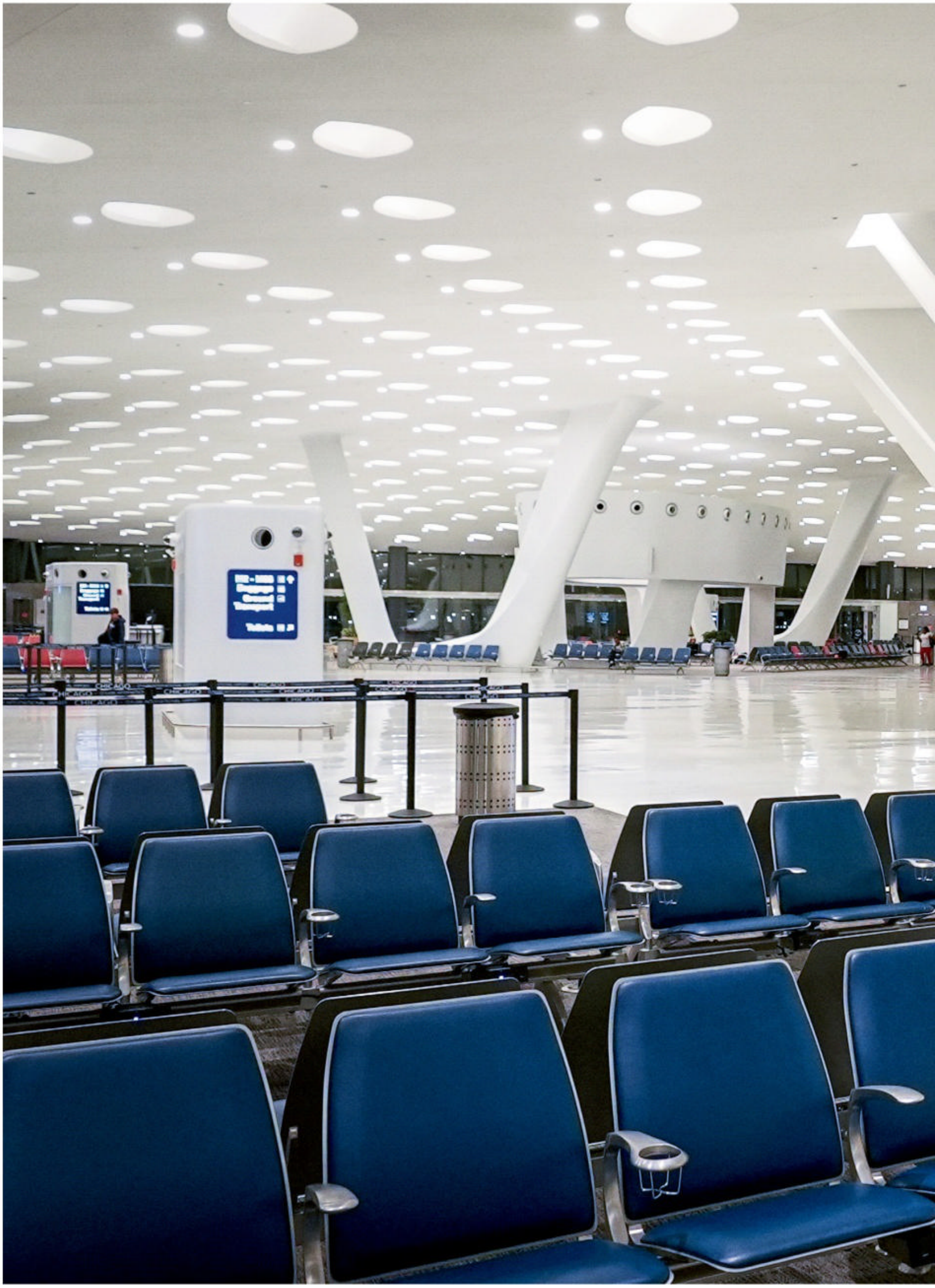
▶ **2:17 a.m., Field Museum**

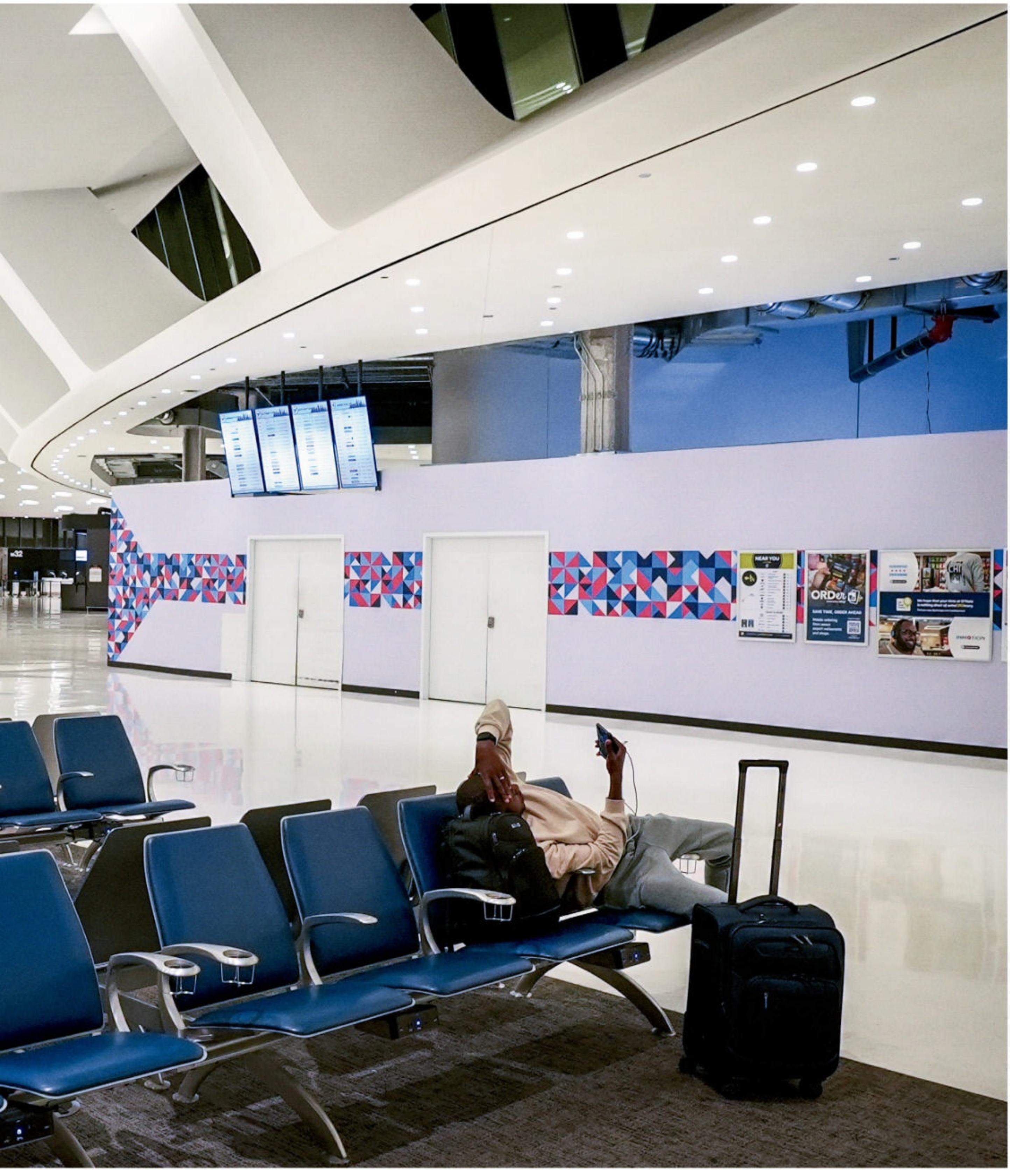
LENNY GILMORE: “The museum at this time feels otherworldly, like you’re walking into somebody’s dream. I was attracted to the clock just because I wanted to anchor the image in this specific moment in time. It speaks to the timelessness of the creatures and this layering of history: the ancient Greek and Roman style, then the prehistoric history on top of that. This image becomes a relic of a relic of a relic.”



2:46 a.m., O'Hare International Airport

ALEX GARCIA: "I went to the international terminal because I felt like there'd be more activity at that hour. But it was like walking through a morgue—there were very few people. That creates a bit of an eerie feeling that betrays the beauty of the architecture, like a sense of 'This isn't how it should be.' If you were going to make a horror movie, it might be a good place to film."





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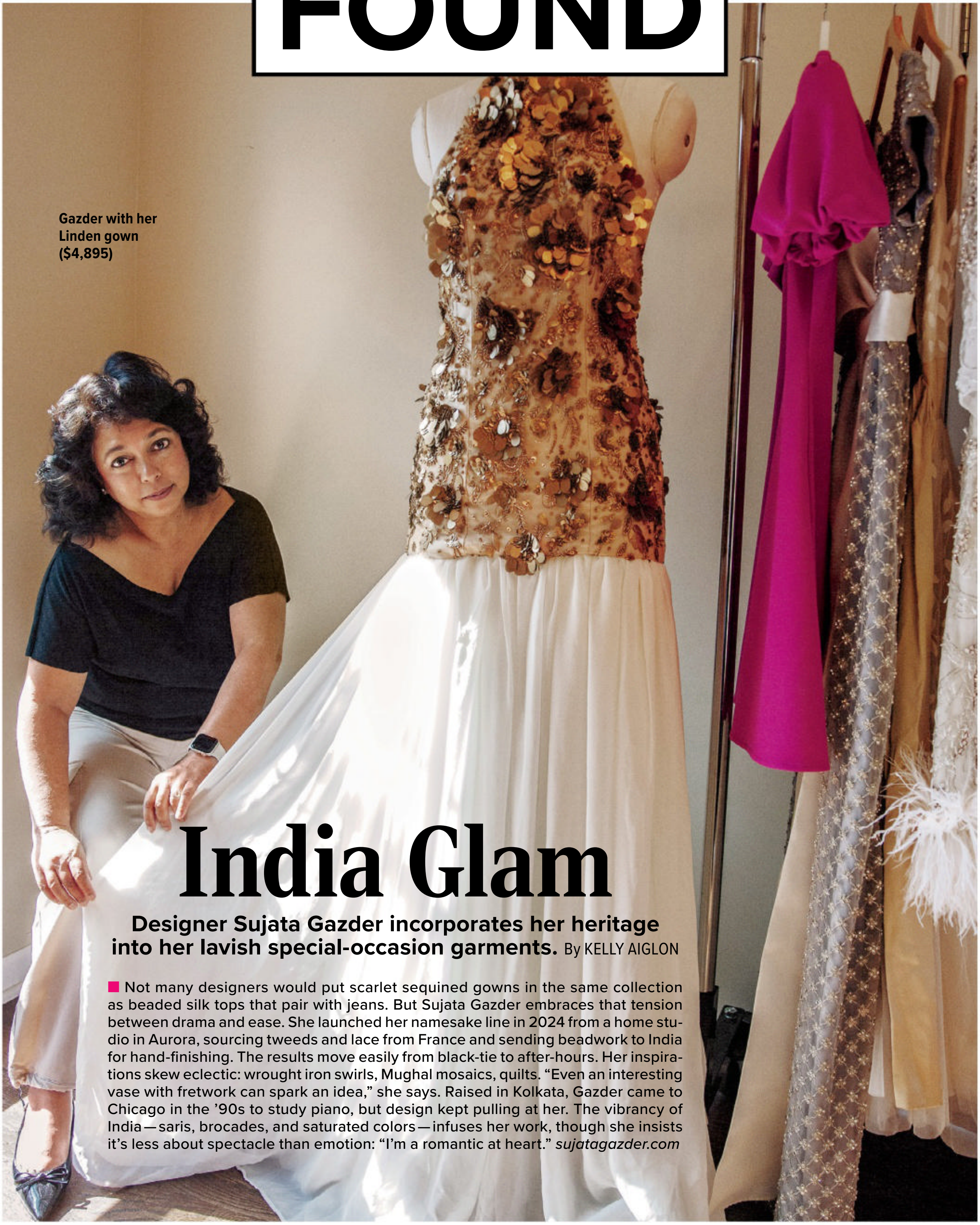


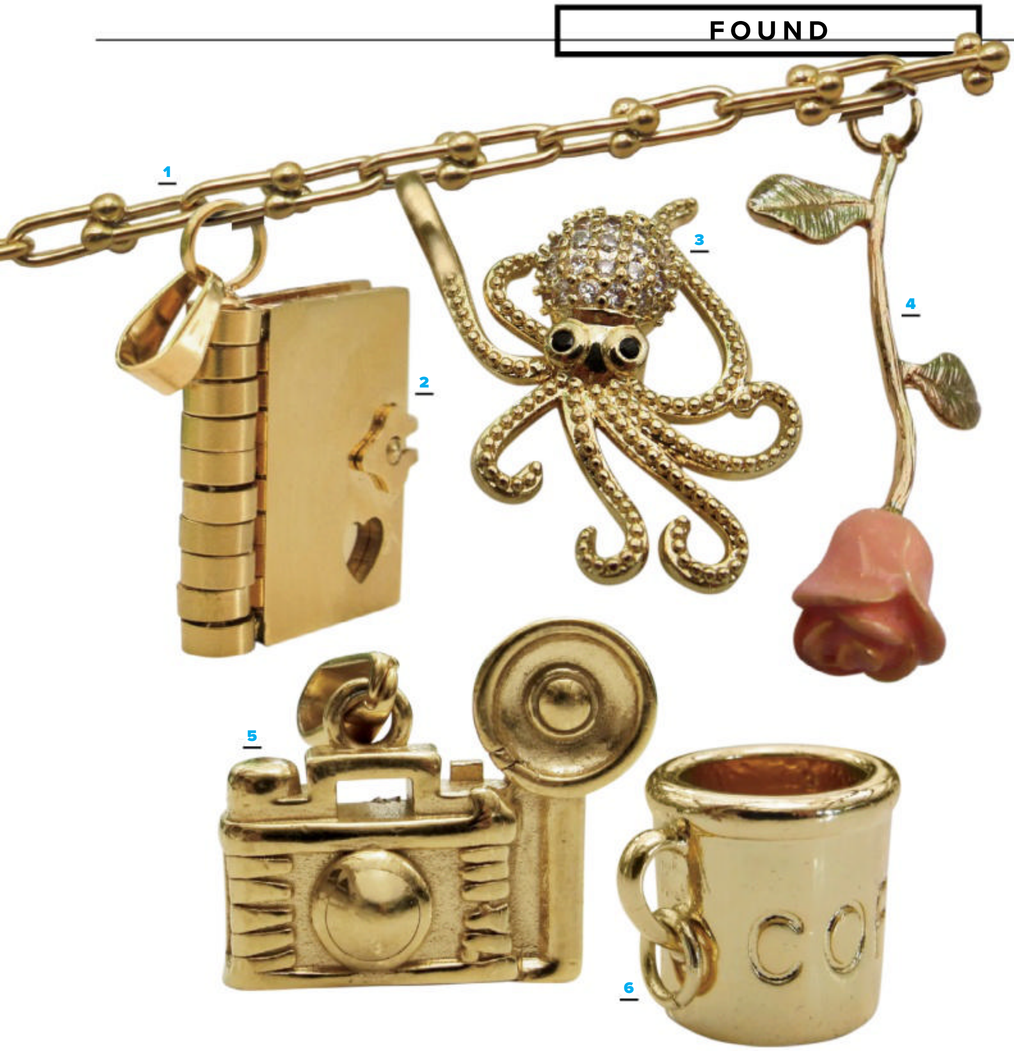
Gazder with her Linden gown ($4,895)

India Glam

Designer Sujata Gazder incorporates her heritage into her lavish special-occasion garments. By KELLY AIGLON

■ Not many designers would put scarlet sequined gowns in the same collection as beaded silk tops that pair with jeans. But Sujata Gazder embraces that tension between drama and ease. She launched her namesake line in 2024 from a home studio in Aurora, sourcing tweeds and lace from France and sending beadwork to India for hand-finishing. The results move easily from black-tie to after-hours. Her inspirations skew eclectic: wrought iron swirls, Mughal mosaics, quilts. “Even an interesting vase with fretwork can spark an idea,” she says. Raised in Kolkata, Gazder came to Chicago in the ’90s to study piano, but design kept pulling at her. The vibrancy of India—saris, brocades, and saturated colors—infuses her work, though she insists it’s less about spectacle than emotion: “I’m a romantic at heart.” *sujatagazder.com*

Photograph by ELIZABETH DE LA PIEDRA



HOW TO SPEND $100: CHARM BAR

Charm School

A Logan Square boutique turns jewelry making into a social ritual. By KELLY AIGLON

WHEN ANA MARIA ESPINOSA WALKED INTO A HIDDEN jewelry studio in Florence, Italy, she expected to merely shop. Instead, she and her family were handed trays of charms, then taught how to assemble them into complete pieces. “It was so fun and memorable,” she says. “To me, jewelry has always been personal. Why not make an activity out of it?” Back in Chicago, Espinosa pivoted from her premed track at Northwestern to replicate the idea. She opened Charm Bar in 2024 with her mother’s help. The Logan Square shop offers affordable stainless steel charms sourced from Italy, Greece, Latin America, and elsewhere. Add to that earrings her Ecuadorian grandmother makes that are shaped like margaritas, purses, and martini glasses. Guests customize chains while sipping sangria at the back counter. Likely, you’ll leave with not just a charm bracelet or necklace but also a good story of how it all came together. *2630 N. Milwaukee Ave.*

1 Cool Girl link chain, $25
2 Booklet charm, $15
3 Octopus charm, $15
4 Hanging rose charm, $15
5 Camera charm, $15
6 Coffee mug charm, $15

THE ENDORSEMENT

Paper Chase

How Evanston’s Passenger rekindled one man’s lifelong fandom of stationery stores

BY LAURENCE GONZALES

As a boy, I loved visiting the stationery store, lingering over the dazzling array of luxurious papers and the writing instruments with gold nibs. Later, I took my first child, Elena, to such a shop. She came to know the love of notebooks. As soon as she could write, she had diaries embossed with her name. The stationer’s was more interesting to her than the toy store. Office Depot and the like, along with Amazon, wiped out our original shop and others. During this period of industrial smashing, Elena described our stationer’s shop as “cup filling” and those doing the smashing as “soul killing.”

Just as independent bookstores have come back, so too have stationery shops. Most recently we discovered Passenger in Evanston (1303 Chicago Ave.). It specializes in beautiful papers, in addition to teas you rarely find outside Japan. You’ll also find paper used for more than stationery and business cards here: There are paper lamps, sculptures, and jewelry, as well as Azuma bags made from hemp and dyed using leftover food. Fine wooden lunchboxes, as well as exotic metal flower vases, make shopping here a delight. Sometimes we go just to smell the incense and fill our cups.

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF STORES

THE GOODS

Cherry on Top

Juicy red hues are saturating wardrobes and living rooms.

By DAVID SYREK

STEM CLASS
Valentino Garavani Cherryfic metal and enamel earrings, $690. *Saks Fifth Avenue, 700 N. Michigan Ave.*

WRAP STAR
Bicolor cashmere scarf, $1,250. *Bottega Veneta, 41 E. Oak St.*

WELL SUITED
Sergio Hudson wool crepe blazer, $2,195, halter vest, $895, and trousers, $1,295. *sergiohudson.com*

RED LIGHT
Flos Luminator floor lamp, $832. *Lightology, 215 W. Chicago Ave.*

HOT ROLLER
Rimowa polycarbonate suitcase, $950. *rimowa.com*

HEEL APPEAL
Atomic ankle boots, $1,500. *Bottega Veneta*

HERMÈS
HERMÈS

POUT CLOUT
Matte lipstick in Rouge H (right) and Rouge Casaque, $81 each. *Hermès, 25 E. Oak St.*

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF VENDORS

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

give CHICAGO

Your year-end guide to philanthropy

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES
Archdiocese of Chicago

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As the region's largest human service provider, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago partners with mission-driven people and organizations across Cook and Lake counties to improve lives, nourish spirits, and strengthen people, families, and communities.

We accompany anyone in need, regardless of their faith, gender, race or ethnicity. Our staff work within our region's most underserved communities. In fiscal year 2025, we provided critical care to people in need through our programs, including:

Immediate Needs programs provided more than 100,000 people in crisis with food, meals, diapers, hygiene kits, clothing and holiday gifts. Emergency financial assistance was distributed to pay utility bills for people in crisis to help them remain housed.

Mothers and Families programs provided 54,000 moms, infants and young children with formula, fresh fruits and vegetables, and nutrition education. More than 500 new and expectant parents received compassionate support and education to help them advocate for themselves and their children. And hundreds of survivors of domestic violence received shelter and programming essential to healing and self-sufficiency.

Seniors and Housing programs provided affordable housing to seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities. More than 35,000 seniors were connected with care and resources to help them age with dignity at home. And, more than 4,000 people at risk of homelessness got help finding and maintaining stable housing.

At Catholic Charities we see how a simple act of kindness, just one flicker of hope, makes a difference. When it's multiplied, the impact is transformational. Your first-time gift will be matched through December 31, 2025. Be the light!

Learn more or donate at
catholiccharities.net/light

PHOTOGRAPH: CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. It leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia—by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support.

The association serves Illinois residents affected by Alzheimer's disease. There are 250,600 Illinoisans living with the disease and 316,000 caregivers. The association offers education programs, support groups, and care consultations completely free of charge to all who need them. Education programs for the general public are offered online and in person on topics such as diagnosis, early warning signs, effective communication, living with the disease, and caregiving techniques.

The Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (800-272-3900) is available around the clock, 365 days a year. Through this free service, specialists and master's-level clinicians offer confidential support and information to people living with dementia, caregivers, families, and the public.

As the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research, the association is committed to advancing vital research toward methods of treatment, prevention and, ultimately, a cure. It provides clinicians with the tools to diagnose Alzheimer's and stay informed on available therapies and resources. It educates lawmakers on the Alzheimer's crisis and engage them in the fight against the disease. The association is the leading voice for Alzheimer's disease advocacy, fighting for critical Alzheimer's research and care initiatives at the state and federal levels.

The first survivor of Alzheimer's is out there, but we won't get there without you. Everyone can help in the fight to end Alzheimer's. Join the cause by staying informed, making a donation, or becoming an advocate for those living with Alzheimer's disease and their families. **Get involved at alz.org/illinois.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

WHO IS GENERATION HOPE? THE ONES WHO ARE GOING TO END ALZHEIMER'S.

The Alzheimer's Association is leading the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia. We provide care and support, and are driving research breakthroughs and promising new treatments. But we need your help.
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ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

The Chicago Community Trust

Here for Good
The Chicago Community Trust unites generous donors, committed nonprofits, and caring residents to meet our region's most pressing needs and effect lasting change for Chicagoans. As our region's community foundation, it's what we've always done, and what we'll always be here to do.

Together, We Achieve More
The number of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago tripled last year and one in five households is experiencing food insecurity. Coming cuts to federal assistance programs will amplify these challenges. As the need for essential services grows, **The Chicago Community Trust's Unity Fund** serves as a way for the region's residents to care for one another. Contributions join forces for greater impact, and your generosity is strategically directed by community and grantmaking experts at the Trust who understand the issues and the organizations working on the frontlines to deliver critical services.

Unity Fund is a testament to the power of collective giving. Since its founding, the fund has made grants to hundreds of nonprofits that provide residents with emergency food, clothing, shelter, legal aid, and more. cct.org/give/

Partnering for Good
From donor advised funds to legacy planning and impact investing, there are many ways we partner with donors to achieve their vision for making a difference. Connect with us to learn more.

This holiday season, give to Unity Fund.
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Help us meet the most critical needs facing Chicago's families. Your generosity will join forces with others for greater impact —providing food, clothing, housing, healthcare, and more to our neighbors.

PHOTOGRAPH: UNITY FUND GRANT PARTNER GRACE HOUSE

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John DiClemente playing at the beach with his grandchild.

Gateway for Cancer Research

Reimagining Patient-Centered, Compassionate Care for Cancer.

Since its inception in Chicago in 1991, Gateway for Cancer Research has been a vital force in accelerating early-phase cancer clinical trials, a crucial yet often underfunded step in the search for new treatments. While these trials are frequently overlooked, Gateway focuses its entire mission on accelerating the development of innovative treatments when patients need them most. The organization is actively supporting 56 trials across the globe, and has raised over $122 million to date, directly impacting the lives of over 30,000 patients and families.

At the helm of Gateway for Cancer Research are Chairman and founder, Mr. Richard J Stephenson, and integrative medicine expert, best-selling author, and Vice-Chair, Dr. Stacie J. Stephenson of Barrington Hills. Their ongoing commitment to patient-centered care ensures that 100% of every dollar raised goes directly to phase I and II trials. This approach gives patients access to cutting-edge research at the earliest and most critical stages of treatment development.

For Greg Friedman, that mission means everything. Diagnosed unexpectedly with colon cancer at just 48, Greg had no symptoms and no risk factors. His care team at Duke University, led by Dr. Nicholas DeVito, enrolled him in a Gateway-funded immunotherapy trial, a more targeted approach than traditional chemotherapy. The treatment gave Greg the chance to reclaim everyday joys. “I’ve learned to prioritize living over simply surviving,” he says.

John DiClemente, a husband, father, and grandfather, shares a similar story of resilience. In 2021, he began experiencing headaches and vision loss, symptoms that ultimately led to a diagnosis of a glioblastoma brain tumor. But after enrolling in a Gateway-supported trial at the University of Michigan, John’s outcome defied the odds. He is now considered a long-term survivor and credits the trial with giving him time with his family.

For Gateway, these aren’t just medical milestones, they’re personal victories. Each trial they fund represents scientific advancement, a renewed chance at life, connection, and dignity. Join Gateway for Cancer Research in bringing hope to patients and families by directly supporting life-changing trials today: **www.gatewaycr.org/hope**

PHOTOGRAPHY: GATEWAY FOR CANCER RESEARCH

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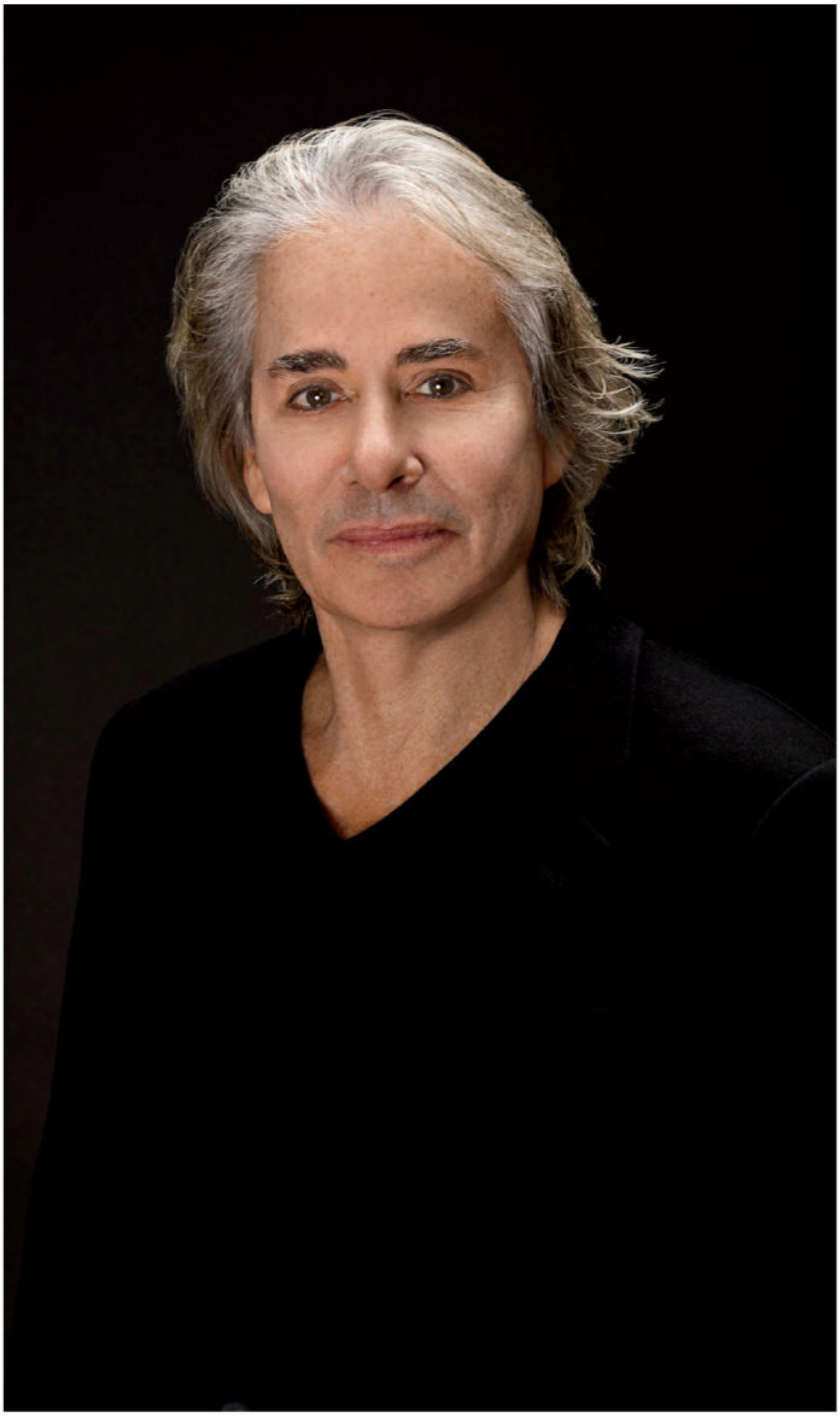

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

Body by Bloch

Steven Bloch, MD

Dr. Steven Bloch is a nationally recognized plastic surgeon with an international patient base. He has consistently been named a "top plastic surgeon." He has been a leader in introducing advanced techniques in his Center of Excellence, including most recently the Vaser 4D Hi-Definition Liposculpture.

A board-certified plastic surgeon for more than 30 years, Dr. Bloch has the skills and experience to match. He rose to prominence quickly and has been featured on CBS, Discovery Channel, FOX News, NBC, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and WGN-TV Chicago, to name a few.

Dr. Bloch combines an artistic sense with a technical, scientific background to create a natural and refined look for his patients. He believes that each of us has an inner sense of how we should look, and the art of plastic surgery is to listen to each patient's desires and needs. It is important to separate reality from fantasy. After a consultation with the patient, a plan is outlined and costs are discussed. The next step is to transform these dreams, when appropriate, into reality.

Dr. Bloch does not believe that his role ends with surgery. He is actively involved in the post-operative phase and has a dedicated staff to assist patients with their needs, whether medical or emotional.

Additionally, he has a nationally recognized medical spa with state-of-the-art, spare-no-expense, cutting-edge technologies to treat the entire body. The latest technology being introduced to the Chicago area is EmFace and Cool Peel. This really works and is painless. We guarantee it. Dr. Bloch supervises these treatments at Skin Deep Medical Spa, which has locations in Highland Park and Glenview.

All injections are given by Dr. Bloch; he believes your face is too important to delegate to a non-physician. Furthermore, a firm understanding of the aging process and underlying anatomy is critical to getting it right.

To learn about new and innovative treatment options, Dr. Bloch encourages you to visit his websites at bodybybloch.com and skindeepmedicalspa.com.

bodybybloch

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847-432-0840

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Highland Park, IL 60035
847-432-0426

Skin Deep Medical Spa
1986 Tower Dr.
Glenview, IL 60026
847-901-0800

bodybybloch.com
skindeepmedicalspa.com

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

Dr. Peter D. Geldner

The Geldner Center Plastic Surgery & Med Spa

Go from ordinary to extraordinary with today's advanced cosmetic surgery and aesthetic procedures from The Geldner Center. Experience a whole new way to feel about yourself and gain a new outlook on life. Dr. Peter Geldner is a nationally recognized board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in cosmetic surgery of the face and body. He has performed surgery on thousands of satisfied patients over the past 33 years and has demonstrated the highest level of expertise in his field. The Geldner Center is committed to maximizing each patient's aesthetic goals while providing a personalized experience.

Dr. Geldner is past president of the Chicago Society of Plastic Surgeons and is considered one of the leading plastic surgeons in the Midwest. He is a perennial fixture on "best of" lists, both regionally and nationally. Dr. Geldner has been named a "Top Doctor" by *U.S. News and World Report*, Castle Connolly, the Consumers' Research Council of America, RealSelf, and *Chicago* magazine. When the media wants an expert, they talk to Dr. Geldner. He has shared his expertise on ABC, NBC, WGN, Fox Business, Fox News, the Learning Channel, Web MD Radio Live, and many other media outlets.

The Geldner Center's Chicago and west suburban locations feature nonsurgical treatments like Ultherapy, Moxi, BBL, Morpheus, CoolSculpting, Emsculpt Neo, Emtone, and Emface. Emface is a revolution in facial treatments. By admitting both synchronized RF and HIFES energies, it simultaneoulsy affects the skin and muscles. The end result is fewer wrinkles. Best of all, Emface treats the full face in only 20 minutes.

The Geldner Center also has licensed nurse injectors in both locations to meet your injectable needs as well as licensed medical aestheticians specializing in chemical peels, photo facials, laser therapy treatment, Ultherapy, Moxi, BBL, Morpheus, microneedling, skin care regimens, and more. We now offer infusion therapy to help with fatigue, anxiety, dehydration, antiaging, and more.

Together, Dr. Geldner and The Geldner Center staff can help you achieve the look you desire with the personalized care you deserve so you have the confidence to live life to the fullest.

GC
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PLASTIC SURGERY & MED SPA

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Chicago, IL 60611

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312-981-4440
Fax: 312-981-4441
mygeldnercenter.com

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@thegeldnercenter

2025 CHICAGO FIVE STAR AWARD WINNERS

These days, it takes a village to manage your financial world. Whether it is managing your assets with a wealth manager, or picking the right life insurance, finding the right team can be a daunting task. In fact, many consumers have a hard time figuring out where to even begin.

Sometimes, a few simple questions can put you off on the right path. Asking a professional what makes working with them a unique experience can help you understand how they work and if their style meshes with your own.

This is a great place to start! Five Star Professional uses its own proprietary research methodology to name outstanding professionals, then works with publications such as *Chicago Magazine* to spread the word about award winners. Each award candidate undergoes a thorough research process (detailed here) before being considered for the final list of award winners. For the complete list of winners, go to www.fivestarprofessional.com.

FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER

DETERMINATION OF AWARD WINNERS CRITERIA

Award candidates who satisfied 10 objective eligibility and evaluation criteria were named 2025 Five Star Wealth Managers. **Eligibility Criteria – Required:** 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative. 2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years. 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review. 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal firm standards. 5. Accepting new clients. **Evaluation Criteria – Considered:** 6. One-year client retention rate. 7. Five-year client retention rate. 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered. 9. Number of client households served. 10. Education and professional designations. 6,399 award candidates in the Chicago area were considered for the Five Star Wealth Manager award. 362 (approximately 6% of the award candidates) were named 2025 Five Star Wealth Managers.

RESEARCH DISCLOSURES

In order to consider a broad population of high-quality wealth managers and investment professionals, award candidates are identified by one of three sources: firm nomination, peer nomination or prequalification based on industry standing. Self-nominations are not accepted. Chicago-area award candidates were identified using internal and external research data. Candidates do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final lists of Five Star Wealth Managers or Five Star Investment Professionals.

- The Five Star award is not indicative of a professional's future performance.
- Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets.
- The inclusion of a professional on the Five Star Wealth Manager list or the Five Star Investment Professional list should not be construed as an endorsement of the professional by Five Star Professional or *Chicago Magazine*.
- Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager, Five Star Investment Professional or any professional is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected professionals will be awarded this accomplishment by Five Star Professional in the future.
- Five Star Professional is not an advisory firm and the content of this article should not be considered financial advice. For more information on the Five Star Wealth Manager or Five Star Investment Professional award programs, research and selection criteria, go to www.fivestarprofessional.com/public/research.

FIVE STAR INVESTMENT PROFESSIONAL

DETERMINATION OF AWARD WINNERS CRITERIA

The investment professional award goes to estate planning attorneys, insurance agents and select others in the financial industry. **Eligibility Criteria – Required:** 1. Credentialed with appropriate state or industry licensures. 2. Actively employed as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of five years. 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review. 4. Accepting new clients **Evaluation Criteria – Considered:** 5. One-year client retention rate. 6. Five-year client retention rate. 7. Number of client households served. 8. Recent personal production and performance (industry specific criteria). 9. Education and professional designations/industry and board certifications. 10. Pro Bono and community service work. This year, we honored 8 Chicago-area investment professionals with the Five Star Investment Professional award.

All award winners are listed in this publication.

Wealth Managers

Financial Planning

Tony Albertino · Albertino Financial *Page 8*

Andrew Michael Allison · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Kelly Bays · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Kevin A. Brainerd · LPL Financial

Nathan Allen Chapel · Tru Financial Strategies

Ryan F. Evans · Blueprint Wealth Advisors, LLC

Jeffrey Feinendegen · TS Financial Group, LLC *Page 9*

John A. Ferrante II · Chicago Oakbrook Financial Group

Joli Fridman · Focus Partners Wealth

Cyril Leo Friend III · LPL Financial

Matthew J. Grezlik · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Jae W. Ha · Chicago Oakbrook Financial Group

Annette Marie Hammortree · Hammortree Financial Services

Thomas Harris · LPL Financial *Page 8*

Kevin Koney · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Michael Kordas · Nestlehut Financial Services, Inc. *Page 3*

Cheryl Kunstle · Tartan Financial Services *Page 7*

David Warren Latko · Latko Wealth Management

Mark Lechowicz · Exemplar Financial Network *Page 8*

Michael Leonetti · Fairport Wealth Leonetti & Associates *Page 4*

Sherwin Lesk · Fairport Wealth Leonetti & Associates *Page 4*

Gabriel D. Lewit · SGL Financial, LLC

Russell G. Luce · Planning Legacies Financial Group

Monte Luzadder · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC *Page 7*

William R. Lymangood Jr. · Morgan Stanley *Page 2*

Thomas Manzardo · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Kevin Merling · Axis Wealth Advisors, LLC

David N. Navarro · Chicago Oakbrook Financial Group

Kevin Edward O'Hara · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Mike Peloquin · Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

Brendon J. Pierce · Chicago Oakbrook Financial Group

Todd M. Powell · Morgan Stanley

Chris Prince · Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

Noah Robinson · Kingdom Financial Solutions

Claude "Bud" Sherman · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC *Page 6*

Michael K. Smith · Insight Financial Partners, LLC

Mark J. Strefner · Infinity Wealth Management, LLC

Michael Edward Sullivan · VestGen Wealth Partners

Scott M. Svoboda · Tru Financial Strategies

Mitchell Todd · The Todd Group *Page 5*

Stephen Todd · The Todd Group *Page 5*

Adam Beierle · Nestlehut Financial Services, Inc. *Page 3*

Jason Wendt · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Philip J. Yun · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Investments

Peter Bauer · Wells Fargo Advisors

Gabriel Chavez · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Norman P. Chiodras · Retirement Planners, Inc.

Nancy A. Effert · Essex, LLC

Deborah Feldman · Fairport Wealth Leonetti & Associates *Page 4*

Erik G. Ford · Fortitude Capital Management

Spiro Garbis · Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

Paul J. Garrett · Garrett Consulting

Justin Todd Halpenny · New Horizon Wealth Strategies

Dan Israelite · Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

Brad Jenks · Star Capital Management

David Mabie · Chicago Capital, LLC

Cynthia Mann · Commonwealth Financial Network *Page 9*

Frank D. McCabe · Wells Fargo Advisors

Richard A. Moras · Wells Fargo Advisors *Page 9*

James A. Mosteller III · Liberty Asset Management, Inc.

Timothy Obendorf · Steward Advisors

Matt Donald Pequet · MPI Wealth Management

Edward Anthony Perry · Perry Wealth Counsel, P. C.

Jennifer Nicole Prosise · The Voyager Group, Ltd.

Karin M. Rettger · My Financial Advisor/ Principal Resource Group

Michael A. Riback · Westpoint Financial Group

Thomas J. Salvino · Performance Wealth

David Schlossberg · Assured Concepts Group, Ltd.

Brett E. Sherpan · Chicago Oakbrook Financial Group

Jeffrey C. Simon · Tryline Private Wealth/The Princeton Group

Abby A. Stancik · Wells Fargo Advisors *Page 6*

Robin Stone · Fairport Wealth Leonetti & Associates *Page 4*

Robert Tutela · Essex, LLC

Ryan Patrick Williamson · Horizon Capital Management, LLC

Daniel T. Younglove · Morgan Stanley *Page 9*

Investment Professional

Estate Planning Attorney

Katrina Cox · Katrina Cox Law, LLC *Page 9*

Continued on FS-10

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The Lymangood Group at Morgan Stanley

10
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Andrea Grant, Vice President, Business Development Associate; Tracy Couch, CRPS™, Portfolio Associate; 2016 – 2025 winner William R. Lymangood Jr., CFP®, Managing Director – Wealth Management, Financial Advisor, Family Wealth Advisor, Senior Portfolio Management Director; Charles Hansen, CFP®, Vice President, Investment Consultant; 2021 – 2022 winner Jennifer Lymangood, Financial Planning Specialist, Portfolio Associate; Alex Runge, CFP®, Registered Client Service Associate

Accumulate ▪ Manage ▪ Utilize ▪ Transfer

The Lymangood Group at Morgan Stanley has been assisting families, trusts, corporations and foundations in achieving their financial objectives since 1981. We are a multi-generational team that includes industry veterans who have helped clients through various market cycles and younger professionals who add a fresh perspective. We provide experience, intellectual capital, and first-class personal service, operating as a cohesive team dedicated to helping your family reach their lifetime goals.

The Lymangood Group at Morgan Stanley takes a comprehensive view. We listen to what is important to you and gain an understanding of your needs. Then, and only then, will we utilize the intellectual capital of Morgan Stanley to determine the right strategies needed to achieve your goals. We take a measured approach to risk that pays particular attention to taxes to help protect and grow your wealth. Our approach is designed to help you see the big picture and look to the future by emphasizing estate planning. This approach is built on regular communication and allows us to provide continuity to our family clients, many of whom we service across three and four generations.

Morgan Stanley offers a vast array of resources that can be customized for how you invest and what you want to achieve. In addition to The Lymangood Group's managed portfolios, you will have access to a full spectrum of investment choices managed by some of the world's most seasoned and respected investment professionals, as well as a premier trading and execution platform. Working together, we can help you accumulate, utilize and effectively transfer your wealth. When you work with any of us, you get the best of all of us.

- **2016 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner William Lymangood Jr.**

Morgan Stanley

4225 Naperville Road, Suite 255 • Lisle, IL 60532
Phone: 630-245-6000
william.lymangood.jr@morganstanley.com
www.morganstanley.com/lymangood

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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complaints with any regulatory authority or FSP's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through FSP's consumer
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Nestlehut Financial Services

3 YEAR WINNER

Left to right: Top row: Linda Wood, Administrative Associate; Peggy Pienta, Administrative Associate; Tina Rehder, Administrative Associate; Middle row: Candice Purdy, Administrative Associate; Jennifer Justin-Pierson, Administrative Associate; Teresa Jimenez, Administrative Associate; Front row: Kyle Tripi, Financial Advisor; Three-year winner Adam Beierle, Financial Advisor; Three-year winner Michael Kordas, Financial Advisor

Secure Your Future

- **Fiduciary**
- **Over 40 years in business**
- **Comprehensive financial planning**
- **Retirement, estate and tax planning**
- **Death administration services**

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At Nestlehut Financial Services, we succeed because we offer an alternative to the impersonal financial services that are prevalent in today's marketplace. We understand you have a choice. Choose an established, experienced partner with a proven track record. We will listen, advise and help create a comfortable approach to your financial planning.

Before we discuss investment advice, we take the time to get to know you. From that comes the appreciation for who you are, what you have achieved and what your hopes are for ongoing financial growth and security. Then, at that point, we can begin to design investment solutions that will help you pursue your financial future.

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Frankfort, IL 60423
Phone: 708-361-6700
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Fairport Wealth/Leonetti & Associates

14
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Fourteen-year winner Michael Leonetti; Eleven-year winner Deborah Feldman; Fourteen-year winner Sherwin Lesk; Eleven-year winner Robin Stone

Take Control of Your Financial Future

Our experienced team strives to:

- **Protect and grow your assets**
- **Maintain and improve the quality of your life**
- **Achieve your personal and financial goals**

Fairport Wealth is considered one of the country's distinguished wealth management practices. It is an organization built on honesty and integrity. These qualities — combined with experience, depth of professional staff, an in-house portfolio management team, a dedicated client services team and a long history of achieving desired results for its clients — have led to a high level of client satisfaction. That makes Fairport Wealth the logical choice for those seeking high-quality, objective and thorough financial advice.

FAIRPORT WEALTH
Leonetti & Associates

1130 Lake Cook Road, Suite 300 • Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
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The Todd Group

7
YEAR
WINNER
The Todd Group
Insurance & Financial Services
630-893-0990
toddgroup.org

Left to right: 2019 – 2025 winner Stephen Todd, CFBS, LACP; 2025 winner Mitchell Todd, Financial Advisor; Maggie Gomez; Jen Dolan; Mary Fox; Dawn Slanker; Ryan Daniels

Strategizing for your financial success does not need to be complicated. The Todd Group will approach your unique financial needs with expertise and an array of options to help fit your specific situation. Our team is here to help you navigate the details and chart the right course by listening and asking the right questions.

The Todd Group
Insurance & Financial Services

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Phone: 630-893-0990 • Cell: 815-245-5855
stodd@financialguide.com • mtodd@financialguide.com
www.toddgroup.org

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12
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Jaime Lopez-Sanchez, Senior Client Associate; Julie Sabransky, Financial Advisor; Twelve-year winner Abby A. Stancik; Melissa Hypes, Client Associate

Abby A. Stancik

CFP®, RICP®, MBA, Managing Director – Investment Officer

Dedicated to Your Success

- 2013, 2015 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager

I am honored to have served the needs of our clients for over 24 years. We have developed a successful practice by emphasizing long-term client relationships built on a foundation of trust, integrity and personal service. We will work closely with you to help you define your goals, develop your plan and track your progress.

WELLS FARGO Advisors

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

13
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Thirteen-year winner Claude "Bud" Sherman, CRPC®, Private Wealth Advisor; Hunter Sherman

Claude "Bud" Sherman

CRPC®, Private Wealth Advisor

Ongoing Guidance and Exceptional Service

- Sound advice from experience and integrity
- Building, managing and maintaining wealth
- Five Star Wealth Manager award winner, 2013 – 2025

I am very grateful and proud to have been named a Five Star Wealth Manager for 13 consecutive years. For over 31 years, I have dedicated myself to serving my clients and doing what is best for them. I personally meet with every client on an ongoing basis to ensure their dreams and goals remain the top priority. I want my relationship with clients to be the one they trust for all of their financial needs. I'm excited to have my daughter, Hunter Sherman, in my practice for the next generation.

Ameriprise Financial

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Cell: 815-396-5505
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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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investment adviser representative; 2. Actively licensed as a RIA or as a principal of a registered investment adviser firm for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by FSP, the wealth manager has not; A. complaints with any regulatory authority or FSP's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through FSP's consumer financial services firm within the past 11 years; F. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by FSP in the future. Visit www.fivestarprofessional.com.

14
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Christine Jereza; 2012 – 2025 winner Monte Luzadder, Private Wealth Advisor, CFP®, CFA;
Corey Wishnia; Bruce Sturgeon

Monte Luzadder

Private Wealth Advisor, CFP®, CFA

Holistic Financial Planning Advice

- 2012 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner
- Personalized Financial Planning
- Customized Wealth Strategies

Monte Luzadder is proud to be selected as a multi-year winner of the Five Star Wealth Manager award. As part of Pioneer Wealth Planning Group, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, we take a personalized approach to understanding our clients' objectives and crafting customized strategies that give them the greatest chance for financial success. We commit ourselves to regular monitoring and consultation to ensure your plan gets adjusted to account for changes in circumstances and to take advantage of new opportunities that arise.

Ameriprise Financial

2400 Ravine Way, Suite 100
Glenview, IL 60025
Phone: 847-486-9700
monte.g.luzadder@ampf.com
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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

2
YEAR
WINNER

Left to right: Shannon Hubbard, Creative Director, Head of Client Service; Claire Chiara, COO, Head of Wealth Management; 2024 – 2025 winner Cheryl Kunstle, President; Jennifer Wilcoxen, OSJ Manager, Head of Supervision; Todd Bailey, Head of Business Development

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Celebrating 29 Years of Experience

- Goals-based financial planning
- Retirement, education and tax planning
- Focus on individuals and business owners
- Woman-owned business

At Tartan Financial Services, we believe that real wealth cannot be measured by money alone, but only together with your level of health and happiness. We seek to understand what's important to you at each stage in your life and closely tailor our services around your preferences and changing needs.

I am honored to be named a Five Star Wealth Manager, but my true reward is seeing our clients thrive in all aspects of their lives.

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FINANCIAL SERVICES

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Crystal Lake, IL 60014
Phone: 815-887-0077
ckunstle@tartanfs.com
www.tartanfs.com

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5,833, 716, 12%, 10/1/15, 2/4/15 - 8/3/15; 2014: 8,161, 744, 9%, 10/1/14, 2/4/13 - 8/3/13; 2013: 3,998, 772, 19%, 10/1/13, 2/4/12 - 8/3/12; 2012: 2,970, 780, 26%,

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should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by FSP or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected

12 YEAR WINNER

Left to right: Lia Hoffmann-Harris; 2012, 2015 – 2025 winner Thomas Harris

Thomas Harris

CFP® Professional

Today, LPL is a leader* in the markets we serve, supporting more than 18,000 financial advisors, 800 institution-based investment programs and 450 independent RIA firms nationwide. We are steadfast in our commitment to the advisor-centered model and the belief that Americans deserve access to personalized guidance from a financial professional.

Advisors affiliated with LPL provide collaborative, independent guidance and advice with access to leading independent research. Using a holistic approach to life planning, your LPL advisor engages you in an ongoing conversation about your needs, goals and objectives to create the life plan that is right for you. Thomas Harris, a 2012, 2015 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager, embodies the LPL philosophy of honest and independent advice.

LPL Financial

1133 W Farwell Avenue
Chicago, IL 60626
Phone: 773-764-1506
thomas.harris@lpl.com • thomasharris.bz

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

Tony Albertino

Financial Advisor

12 YEAR WINNER

Albertino Financial
Independent Investment Advice

1100 Jorie Boulevard, Suite 359
Oak Brook, IL 60523
Phone: 630-368-1190
talbertino@albertinofinancial.com
www.albertinofinancial.com

- **2012, 2014 – 2016, 2018 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager**

Our culture is a set of values that guide everything we do, including communicating with clients, collaborating as a team and giving back to our community. Our values supply the compass by which we stay focused, providing independent financial advice.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

Mark Lechowicz

Wealth Advisor

2 YEAR WINNER

Exemplar
Financial Network

413 E Terra Cotta Avenue
Crystal Lake, IL 60014
Phone: 815-459-4550
mlechowicz@exemplarfn.com
www.exemplarfn.com

Committed To Serving My Clients Through Every Situation Life Brings

- **Helping to fulfill charitable intentions and plan wealth transfer to the next generation**
- **Tailored investment strategies to help guide you toward your goals**

As a financial advisor since 2005, Mark Lechowicz specializes in providing solutions for individuals, families and business owners through financial planning. Mark's cool temperament and outstanding work ethic make him well-suited to help others navigate their wealth management plans with a personal level of service as an LPL Investment Advisor Representative. Mark is an LPL Investment Advisor Representative who provides financial planning, investment advice and brokerage services.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

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14 YEAR WINNER

Jeffrey Feinendegen

Managing Partner

TS FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC
Comprehensive Wealth Management

1052 N Western Avenue
Lake Forest, IL 60045
Phone: 847-840-5054
jeff@tsgroupllc.com
www.tsgroupllc.com

Jeff's focus is to build lasting client relationships based on trust, integrity and responsiveness. His commitment to understanding your true needs and goals allows him to develop a comprehensive financial plan for the many stages of your financial life.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

10 YEAR WINNER

Richard A. Moras

MBA, Senior Vice President – Investment Officer

WELLS FARGO Advisors

500 Lake Cook Road, Suite 300
Deerfield, IL 60015
Office: 847-572-4320
richard.moras@wfadvisors.com
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Richard serves select executives, families and business owners, providing objective, timely financial guidance. Richard is a 2016 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

11 YEAR WINNER

Cynthia Mann

MBA, AIF®, CDFA®

Mann Financial Group, LLC

2215 York Road, Suite 214
Oak Brook, IL 60523
Office: 630-568-6720
cynthia@mfgwealthpartners.com

Thank you to all my loyal clients who have made this journey through financial market lifecycles, truly an adventure. I look forward to the challenges of the upcoming decades as we integrate AI into our lives. However, nothing will ever take the place of an advisor striving to provide exceptional client service, as I do.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

11 YEAR WINNER

Daniel T. Younglove

Financial Advisor, Senior Vice President

Morgan Stanley

2211 York Road, Suite 100
Oak Brook, IL 60523
Phone: 630-203-6170
daniel.t.younglove@morganstanley.com
advisor.morganstanley.com/daniel.t.younglove

- Series 7, 63 and 65 licenses

For over 31 years, Dan has been helping people achieve their lifetime goals. There are many dynamics to financial planning. Knowing exactly what a client's goals are and prioritizing them is just as important as the strategy used to achieve them. Daniel is a 2015 – 2025 Five Star Wealth Manager award winner.

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FIVE STAR WEALTH MANAGER AWARD WINNER

Katrina Cox

Attorney At Law

KATRINA COX LAW

15255 S 94th Avenue, Suite 500
Orland Park, IL 60462
Phone: 708-942-5261
attorney@katrinacoxlaw.com
katrinacoxlaw.com

- 2025 Five Star Investment Professional award winner

Katrina Cox LLC was established in 2014 with a strong emphasis on family—both yours and ours. We specialize in real estate and estate planning, working closely with our clients to ensure they have a clear understanding of their options. Whether you're creating an estate plan or buying your first home, our goal is to empower you to make informed decisions.

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Continued from FS-1

All award winners are listed in this publication.

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Robert W. Baird & Co.

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Vertex Planning Partners

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Ambassador Wealth Management

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HP Becker & Co.

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Gaughan Wealth Management

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Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

John George Gilchrist
Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

Will Frederick Gilchrist
Oppenheimer & Co. Inc.

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Riverstone Wealth Partners

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Paulina Krystyna Matel
Morgan Stanley

Trevor Darryl Mathias
Morgan Stanley

Nicole Marie Mayer
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Rose Marie Marie McBride
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Ryan Patrick McGinnis
Wells Fargo Advisors

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This award was issued on 10/01/2025 by Five Star Professional (FSP) for the time period 01/01/2025 through 08/01/2025. Fee paid for use of marketing materials. Self-completed questionnaire was used for rating. This rating is not related to the quality of the investment advice and based solely on the disclosed criteria. 6,399 Chicago-area wealth managers were considered for the award; 362 (6% of candidates) were named 2025 Five Star Wealth Managers. The following prior year statistics use this format: YEAR: # Considered, # Winners, % of candidates, Issued Date, Research Period. 2024: 6,273, 400, 6%, 10/1/24, 1/9/24 - 8/9/24; 2023: 5,549, 405, 7%, 10/1/23, 1/9/23 - 7/31/23; 2022: 4,912, 384, 8%, 10/1/22, 1/24/22 - 7/29/22; 2021: 5,635, 386, 7%, 10/1/21, 12/28/20 - 8/6/21; 2020: 4,636, 356, 8%, 10/1/20, 1/6/20 - 8/7/20; 2019: 5,430, 429, 8%, 10/1/19, 1/7/19 - 8/9/19; 2018: 5,449, 435, 8%, 10/1/18, 1/12/18 - 8/17/18; 2017: 3,781, 438, 12%, 10/1/17, 12/16/16 - 8/3/17; 2016: 3,411, 726, 22%, 9/1/16, 2/26/16 - 8/19/16; 2015: 5,833, 716, 12%, 10/1/15, 2/4/15 - 8/3/15; 2014: 8,161, 744, 9%, 10/1/14, 2/4/13 - 8/3/13; 2013: 3,998, 772, 19%, 10/1/13, 2/4/12 - 8/3/12; 2012: 2,970, 780, 26%, 10/1/12, 2/4/11 - 8/3/11. This year, we honored 8 Chicago-area investment professionals with the Five Star Investment Professional award.

Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or placed on the final list of Five Star Wealth Managers. The award is based on 10 objective criteria. Eligibility criteria – required: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser (RIA) or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Actively licensed as a RIA or as a principal of a registered investment adviser firm for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (As defined by FSP, the wealth manager has not; A. Been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a license being suspended or revoked, or payment of a fine; B. Had more than a total of three settled or pending complaints filed against them and/or a total of five settled, pending, dismissed or denied complaints with any regulatory authority or FSP's consumer complaint process. Unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through FSP's consumer complaint process; feedback may not be representative of any one client's experience; C. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint; D. Filed for personal bankruptcy within the past 11 years; E. Been terminated from a financial services firm within the past 11 years; F. Been convicted of a felony); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients. Evaluation criteria – considered: 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. FSP does not evaluate quality of services provided to clients. The award is not indicative of the wealth manager's future performance. Wealth managers may or may not use discretion in their practice and therefore may not manage their clients' assets. The inclusion of a wealth manager on the Five Star Wealth Manager list should not be construed as an endorsement of the wealth manager by FSP or this publication. Working with a Five Star Wealth Manager or any wealth manager is no guarantee as to future investment success, nor is there any guarantee that the selected wealth managers will be awarded this accomplishment by FSP in the future. Visit www.fivestarprofessional.com.

CHICAGO
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SECRET SUPPER

Chicago magazine hosted its second Secret Supper of the year on August 25 at The Alston, welcoming nearly 150 guests for an intimate and unforgettable evening. Guests were treated to a four-course dining experience crafted by The Alston's culinary team, beginning with steak tartare, brochettes, and a house salad highlighted by Roth Grand Cru Alpine cheese, generously provided by sponsor Emmi Roth.

The main course showcased a perfectly prepared petite filet accompanied by creste di gallo, and the evening concluded on a sweet note with a warm and elegant apple tartine. The combination of a sophisticated menu, a vibrant crowd, and the elevated atmosphere made the night a signature Secret Supper experience, one that celebrated food, community, and connection. The evening was sponsored by Brizo Chicago and Emmi Roth.

1. The scene at Chicago magazine's Secret Supper. **2.** First Course: Beef Brochettes **3.** The Alston's beverage team preparing the craft specialty cocktails.

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCIS SON

▸ To purchase tickets for future Secret Supper events please visit: chicagomag.com/secret-supper.

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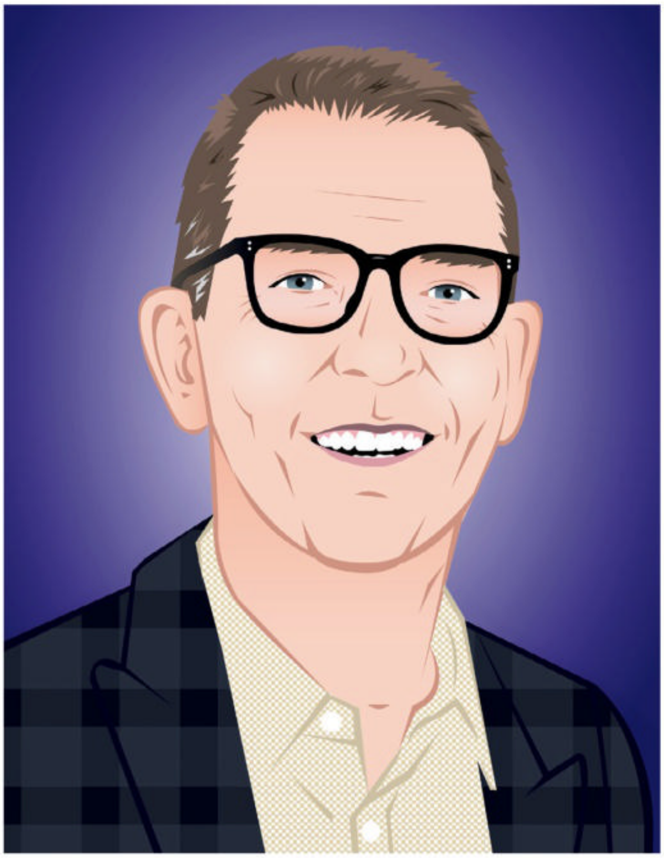

Ted Allen

The *Chopped* host, 60, on the knife you need, cable-level fame, and his weakness for chips

Interview by MIKE THOMAS

🟩 **My chef friend Marc Murphy can feed 50 people** at his house by himself without stressing at all. I do not have that gene. I'm not a professional chef. I did not go to culinary school. I've worked in restaurants but not *real* restaurants. And I prefer not to have people staring at me while I cook. In fact, I ordered my last group of guests out of the kitchen.

🟩 **You don't need a $1,000 knife**, but you definitely need a good knife. And the most important knife for me is an eight-inch chef's knife. You have to keep it sharp. It's actually more dangerous to have a dull knife, because it's more likely to slip and cut your fingers. You can get a Chicago Cutlery chef's knife for probably 30 bucks. That's what I have. Sturdy, full-tang, high-carbon steel. Actually, maybe I'll sharpen it while we talk.

🟩 ***Chicago* magazine was my first job that paid.** I edited the front section. Even today, on *Chopped*, I get a script that's about 18 pages and I edit the hell out of it. I can't help it. I remove redundancies. I remove anything that has me saying things like, "Well, you're a plucky fellow." I get rid of adverbs because they are the leeches that suck the blood from literature. I'm just lucky my producers appreciate that.

🟩 **Getting famous is a fascinating thing.** I was 37 when *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* happened. We call ourselves cable-ebrities. It's a certain level of fame that is kind of helpful: People are nice to me, but I can walk around cities. I remember the first time I got recognized. It was at a flea market on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and I didn't know what to do because I was so shocked and embarrassed. So I said, "Yeah, I get that a lot." I realize now that if you're lucky enough to have somebody come up and say they love your show, the appropriate reaction is "Thank you."

🟩 **My husband, Barry, and I met when I was 28**, and he was 24. But for the first season of *Queer Eye*, I was in New York alone because we needed to see if it was going to go anywhere. That was hard. Pro tip: When you have a long separation from someone you love, watch the same show or movie at the same time and call each other during the commercials. There's something about it that kind of works.

🟩 **I eat potato chips every day.** It's a weakness. Lay's sour cream and onion, generally.

🟩 **Music is my favorite art form.** I love the excitement of waiting for the curtain to go up and rocking out. I like to go to concerts alone. No hassle. I go early because I want a good seat. And I want a T-shirt. Massive geek.

🟩 **You know how tricky it is to get the first brownie out of the pan?** Get a fish spatula. It's a steel slotted spatula that's a little flexible, and usually the tip of it is at an angle. You slide it under that brownie and you can get it out clean. I love that tool.

🟩 **I have every piece of *Chopped* swag that has ever been made.** It's an immaculate collection – mostly T-shirts and hoodies. But I can't ever wear any of it, because I'd look like a schmuck. If the Smithsonian is interested, I'd be happy to donate it. C

Illustration by QUICKHONEY

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